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SERIES
FOR
GIRLS

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MAYFLOWER SERIES FOR GIRLS

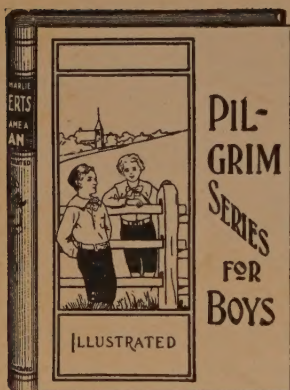


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KITTY'S VALENTINE. Page 42.

THE PROVERB SERIES.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER.

BY

MRS. BRADLEY,

AUTHOR OF "GRACE'S VISIT," "DOUGLASS FARM," "BREAD UPON
THE WATERS," "PICTURE STORY BOOK," "BESSIE,"
"LITTLE FIR TREE," ETC.

BOSTON

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TO
THE DEAR LITTLE PEOPLE
OF
"SPRINGSIDE" AND "THE HOLLOW."



YOU remember the old proverb, "*Birds of a feather flock together*"? These stories of the faults and confessions, the lessons and rewards, the mistakes and amendments of children like yourselves, are "birds of a feather" in many respects, and so "flock together" naturally in this little book which I have the pleasure of presenting to you.

In respect of age and relationship, and affection for one another, in love of fun, and faculty for mischief, — and also, I think, in many higher and holier faculties, — you are yourselves "birds of a feather." May you always "flock together" for all good and beautiful purposes; encouraging each other's efforts, avoiding each other's faults, sympathizing tenderly in each other's joy and sorrow, until you plume your wings to those upper spheres where "birds of a feather flock together" with endless song and rejoicing.

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BIRDS OF A FEATHER.

SUSIE'S SLEIGH-RIDE.

“**M**AMMA,” said little Susie Thompson, one Saturday morning, “can I go out on the sidewalk, and play with Carrie Pratt?”

“If you are well wrapped up,” her mother answered. “You know there is a great deal of snow on the ground, and it is very cold.”

“O, I know!” said Susie. “Overshoes, and leggins, and hood, and cloak, and mittens, and all that! Dear me! what a lot of things it takes to keep anybody warm!—doesn’t it, mamma? and it’s so tiresome getting them all on!”

“Anybody ought to be very thankful to have such a lot of nice warm clothes,” her mother answered. “It isn’t half so tiresome for you to

put on your wraps as for some poor little girl to go shivering through the streets without any."

"Well, I suppose not," said Susie, sitting down upon the floor, and tugging vigorously at her India-rubber boot. "But I do say that leggins and overshoes are a great bother, nevertheless. O, dear!" as an unusually hard jerk threw her backwards, and bumped her head against the door, "I do wish I had somebody to put them on for me! Carrie Pratt *never* puts hers on!"

Mrs. Thompson looked down with a smile at the fretful little face. Susie was rather apt to get discouraged over small difficulties, but her mother did not spoil her by helping her out of them. She knew it was much better for her to learn to conquer them herself by patience and perseverance, and Susie knew very well what that smile meant, and that there was no hope of her mother's offering to put the shoes on for her.

So she concluded to try again; and as she really made an effort not to be impatient, she was soon rewarded with success. Both leggins and both overshoes on, it was an easy matter to arrange the rest; and, in a few minutes, Susie,

looking the picture of comfort, in her gray beaver cloak and pretty Solferino hood, with mittens to match, was jumping down stairs, two steps at a time, on her way to the street.

Carrie Pratt lived just opposite, in the brown cottage with such a pretty garden in front, and Susie ran across the street to call her out to play. But no Carrie answered, although she stood at the gate and called, "Carrie! Carrie!" as loud as she could. Her mother came to the window presently, and looked out.

"O, is it you, Susie Thompson?" she said. "Carrie isn't at home, dear. She went over to New York with her papa this morning, and she won't be back before night, for they are going to the Museum this afternoon."

"O, dear!" exclaimed Susie. "Now I haven't got anybody to play with! I wish I could go to the Museum, too!"

It was not much use to wish that, however; so Susie went across the street again, feeling rather disconsolate, and leaned her back against the iron railing of the front yard, while she considered what she was going to do with herself. There was nobody out on the sidewalk, for the snow had been cleared away in front of all the

houses, and the boys had taken their sleds up on the avenue, or down to Fort Green. Susie could see a group of girls standing at the corner watching them, and hear their shouts of laughter as somebody got a tumble in the snow ; but they were all much older and larger girls than she was, and she did not care about going amongst them.

“ I wish Carrie hadn’t gone to New York ! ” she said at last, pettishly. “ It spoils all my fun, and I shall just have to go into the house again, after I’ve had so much trouble, too, getting ready to come out. O, but I guess I won’t, though ! ” for a sudden recollection came to her of a bright, new three-cent piece which her father had given her at the breakfast table that morning.

“ I’ve got my money in my pocket, and I think I’ll go down to Mrs. Burke’s, and spend it.”

Mrs. Burke was the mistress of a small shop on the lower avenue, such a little distance from home that Susie was allowed to go there by herself. There were many temptations in this shop to little people, and a very little capital went a great way in it, for “ One Penny ” was the fixed price for most of the commodities. The window was garnished with strings of beads all the colors

of the rainbow—one penny each; the shelves were crowded with dolls' furniture—cradles, bedsteads, chairs, round tables, wash-tubs, churns, and dust-pans—one cent apiece; the counter was set out with red and yellow sugar toys, peppermint baskets, candy canes, cocoa-nut cakes, and twists of taffy—all, price One Penny!

Susie could hardly tell how to invest her three-pence among so many attractions. She wished very much for Carrie's advice, but Carrie not being there to give it, she had to decide for herself, and finally selected a peppermint-stick, a string of blue beads, and a very diminutive wash-tub, with a hole in each handle. What she meant to do with this I cannot tell, for it was not large enough to wash the smallest size doll's pocket handkerchief. She was quite satisfied with it, however, and walked off admiring her tub extremely.

Just as she shut the shop door behind her, a milkman's sleigh came jingling up the street; and Susie stopped to look at it, quite interested, for it was not at all like the rough-looking things she had seen every day since the snow came. This was much larger, and painted bright red

all over: it had two handsome horses, each with a string of silver bells, and on the back seat, behind the milk-cans, was a buffalo robe. Altogether it was a very stylish turn-out for a milkman; but Susie was more interested in the fact that three children — two girls and a boy — were sitting close together on this buffalo robe, all of them smiling as if they were in the highest possible state of enjoyment.

Of all things in the world Susie thought a sleigh-ride was the most delightful. She had had about three in her life, and they were occasions never to be forgotten. It was no wonder, then, that she watched this happy-looking party with interest, and wished herself among them, as the sleigh came swiftly towards her; and she was glad when the milkman stopped his horses a few doors from Mrs. Burke's, and got out with a dipper full of milk, because it gave her an opportunity to look at them all more nearly. The boy had climbed over into the front seat to hold the reins, but, when he saw Susie standing on the curb-stone, he leaned back, and began to whisper with the two girls. Susie heard one of them say, —

“Yes—let her; there's plenty of room;”
and then the boy called out, smiling, —

"I say, Sissy, would you like to have a ride? You can jump in, if you would; *he* won't care." "He" meaning the milkman, who was just coming up the basement steps with his empty dipper, and heard what the boy had said.

"Yes, jump in," he answered, with a good-natured nod to the little stranger. "I shall get a load by and by if I keep on. Make room, you youngsters there, for another passenger!"

And he held out his hand to help Susie in. But she stood still, and did not offer to take it. The suddenness of the invitation surprised and confused her, so that she did not know what to do, and could only stare at the good-natured milkman, with a half-eager, half-ashamed look.

"Come on! I can't wait!" he exclaimed, a little impatiently. "If you don't want to get in, say so!"

Susie could not say that, for she *did* want to get in dreadfully; only she knew that she ought not to without her mother's permission. But there was no time to get that, no time even to think whether she would be displeased or not. There was only the chance of a sleigh-ride, and, if she missed it now, she might not have another all winter!

She hardly knew how it happened, it was all so sudden and bewildering; but in another minute she found herself in the sleigh, tucked in between the two girls, who very kindly made room for her in the middle, while the horses shook their heads until all the silver bells jingled together, and away they dashed merrily up Clinton Avenue. It seemed hardly a minute before they were flying past her own home. She caught a glimpse of her mother sitting at the nursery window, but Mrs. Thompson did not see *her*. It was the last place where she would have thought of looking for Susie, so she did not even glance up at the sound of the bells; and the sleigh dashed on unnoticed, though Susie had crouched down between her companions, in great fear of being discovered.

She began to feel already that she had done wrong, and to wish that she were out of the sleigh. But she was ashamed to ask the milkman to stop just for that, when he had been so kind; and then the swift, gliding motion over the snow, and the merry tinkle of the bells, were so *very* pleasant, and the other children seemed to be so happy! Why shouldn't she enjoy it as well as they? So she reasoned with herself,

until she made up her mind that it was no great matter after all, and she might as well have a nice time as the others. She would get out the first time he stopped to leave milk again, and go straight home. Mamma wouldn't care, she knew!

But by the time the milkman stopped again, Susie had got to talking with the little girls, and could not bear to think of getting out.

"I'll wait a little longer, and get out next time," she thought.

But it was the same thing at the next stoppage, and the next; the longer she put it off, the more unwilling she grew, till at last she made up her mind that she was quite too far from home to walk back, and she would wait in the sleigh until the milkman had gone his round, and could carry her back himself. She never thought to ask him whether he meant to go back the same way that he came: she took that for granted, and settled herself comfortably to enjoy her long ride.

So they went on, farther and farther from home, up and down streets that Susie had never been into in her life before, and from which, left to herself, she would never have known what

way to turn to get home again. But she gave herself no concern. She felt extremely comfortable now that she had determined what to do, and she liked her companions so much that she did not once remember Carrie Pratt and the Museum. What nice little girls they were! she thought. She must really ask them what their names were, and coax her mamma to let her go to see them some day. The boy, too, was very good-natured; he had given her a cake of maple sugar, "and kept smiling at her," as Susie afterwards told her mamma, "as if he liked her pretty well." Which was very likely, for Susie's rosy cheeks and bright eyes were pretty enough to make any boy smile at them.

They stopped by and by in front of a large grocery on Atlantic Street. "Here you are, Rollo," said the milkman, reining up his horses.

"*Rollo!* that's just like a story-book," thought Susie. "But I wonder what he's stopping here for."

"Good by!" Rollo cried, jumping up quickly. "Much obliged for my ride, Mr. Mickey. Good by, little girl!" to Susie. And in a minute he had jumped out of the sleigh into the snow. And

Susie, looking back as the horses started again, saw him run into the store, stamping the snow from his boots as he went.

"Is that where he lives?" she asked of the girls.

"Yes," was the answer. "His father keeps the grocery; and we live down at the next corner, over the baker's. *We* are going to get out presently, too."

"Are you?" said Susie, feeling a little disgusted at having been so intimate with people that lived in groceries and over bakers' shops.

"Yes; haven't we had an elegant ride? Mr. Mickey took us in when he brought our milk this morning, and we've been all round Brooklyn with him. Whereabouts do *you* live, and when are you going to get out?"

"O," said Susie, with a little toss of her head, "I live a great way from here, in a great deal nicer street—Clinton Avenue!"

"*Do* you?" exclaimed both the children together. "That *is* a long way off. How shall you ever get home?"

"Why," said Susie, beginning to feel uncomfortable, "I shall get home just as you do. The milkman will take me back, of course."

The two girls looked at each other, and laughed, when Susie said this; and the milkman, who had been listening to the conversation, turned round, and looked at her, too, in a way she did not like at all. She felt her face growing red with shame and vexation; but she said, half proudly, in answer to his look, —

“I’m going to wait in the sleigh till you go back again the same way you came. It’s too far for me to walk home.”

The man smiled. “I’m afraid you’ll get tired of waiting, Sissy,” he answered. “I shan’t go back that way till to-morrow morning.”

“Then how am I to get home?” Susie exclaimed, ready to cry. “It’s so far, and I don’t even know the way!”

“Don’t you? I’m sorry for that; but why didn’t you get out sooner? I *thought* you were taking it pretty easy; but then I supposed you knew what you were about.”

“I thought you would come back, of course,” said Susie, angrily, and trying hard to choke down a great sob that was rising in her throat.

“But you ought to have asked me about that before you came so far. I’m sorry, but I can’t possibly take you back. I’ve got to be in New

York by one o'clock, and it is half-past twelve now. It's as much as I can do to get over the ferry in time."

He did not speak crossly, and evidently felt very sorry for her; but still his words were so decided that Susie saw there was no sort of hope. She sat still without answering, and looked the picture of despair. Her lips quivered, her color came and went, in her distress and mortification, while the great tears *would* crowd up to her eyes, though she dashed them away so proudly.

The children looked at her pityingly, but they did not know what to say to her. The milkman asked, presently, —

"Whereabouts did you say you lived? Clinton Street, or Clinton Avenue?"

"Clinton *Avenue*, near Myrtle," said Susie, trying to speak distinctly.

"Whew! it's miles away!" he muttered, under his breath. "If it was Clinton Street, a body might do something for her, but it's no use thinking of it. You'd better get out here," he added aloud, drawing up his horses in front of the bakery, "and I'll tell you how to get home. There's Court Street, you see, just above. Now, when you get there, turn to your left, and walk

straight along till you come to the City Hall — you know that when you see it, don't you? Then keep on for a block farther, and you'll be in Fulton Street. When you get there, look out for a blue car, — the blue cars go up Myrtle Avenue, — and if you follow their track, you'll get home safe. Do you understand?"

Susie nodded her head. She could not have spoken without sobbing, and she was too proud to let him see her cry. He helped them all out of the sleigh, saying again, —

"You're sure you understand? down Court to Fulton, and then follow the blue car. By the way, you'd better get into it, and ride home; I'll give you some change;" and he began to fumble in his pocket for pennies.

But this was more than Susie could submit to. Take money from him? No, indeed! She found voice enough to utter a rather scornful refusal, and Mr. Mickey withdrew his hand, saying, carelessly, —

"All right, if you don't want it. Better take my advice, though, and ride home in the car. It's a long stretch for little feet. Don't lose yourself, whatever you do; I can't stop any longer."

With this he drove off, and the poor little waif was left standing on the sidewalk of this noisy, bustling, unfamiliar street, without a single friend to turn to for help or guidance. The two little girls lingered by her, full of compassion, but as perplexed and confused as herself. One of them took a bright thought presently, and said, kindly, —

“Come into our house, and stay with mother a little while. Maybe she’ll know somebody that’s going your way — and she’ll give you some dinner anyhow. You must be hungry.”

But Susie was much too miserable to be hungry. She only wanted to get home as fast as possible, and she had no faith in their mother’s power to help her. She said No to all their kind offers, and hurried away in the direction the milkman had told her to take, though she had no very clear idea of his instructions after all.

She did remember to turn to the left when she reached Court Street, and walked on properly enough towards the City Hall. It is not a long walk to one familiar with the way, but it seemed an age to Susie before the tall white building, standing in its snow-covered enclosure,

loomed up before her eyes. She thought she *must* have gone wrong half a dozen times, but the welcome landmark appeared at last, and she felt for a moment as if she had come to the end of her troubles, only to find the next moment that she had but reached the beginning of them ; for when she had crossed the square, she saw so many streets all running together there, so many cars of all colors going backwards and forwards, such a crowd of people and vehicles hurrying past her in every possible direction, that she felt utterly bewildered, and could not have told, to save her life, which way she ought to turn.

Two or three times she tried to stop some passer-by to ask for direction ; but her timid voice was unheard, or unheeded, in the noonday throng ; and at last, in perfect desperation, she darted across the railroad track, dodging the horses as best she could, and turned into the first street she saw. There was no name to be seen, but she hoped it might be the right one, and hurried on as fast as her weary feet could carry her, looking eagerly as she went for the blue car which was to be her guide. No blue car met her eyes, however. Cheap, second-hand stores were on either side of the way. Dirty, disagreeable

children played on the narrow, steep sidewalk, and carts and drays rattled noisily through the middle of the street.

Block after block was passed, and Susie quickened her pace almost to a run, hoping to get into a nicer neighborhood. But it grew worse instead of better, and at last, just as she had made up her mind to ask somebody where she was, she saw, directly in front of her, at the foot of the street, a long, low building, with arched gateways, and above them, in large letters, —

“Catharine Ferry.”

Poor Susie! She was more utterly at a loss than ever now; and tired, cold, and perfectly discouraged, she stopped outright, and burst into tears. People were coming up from the ferry, and a common-looking woman, with a baby in her arms, stopped to ask what was the matter. As plainly as she could speak for crying, Susie explained that she wanted to find the way to Fulton Street. And the woman said, rather roughly, —

“Come on, then, and I’ll show you, but stop crying about it! I don’t know what people are thinking of to trust such children out in the streets.”

"If she only knew!" Susie thought, half resenting the imputation upon her mother. But the woman asked no questions,—her baby was fretting, and all her attention was given to that,—so Susie followed her in silence, retracing her steps until she had almost reached the point from which she had started.

"There, now," said the woman, pointing ahead, "I must get my baby home, so I can't go any farther with you. But if you'll keep on another block, and then turn to your right, you'll be in Fulton Street."

Susie thanked her, and hurried on, beginning to feel hopeful once more, in spite of her flagging strength, and her feet and hands aching with cold. She was very careful to obey the direction of turning to the right, and, in a few minutes more, her eyes were gladdened by the sight for which she had so eagerly longed—a *blue car*. She was all right now, she thought, with a bound of hope and relief; and a new energy seemed to come into her poor little feet as she walked firmly after the car, keeping her eyes fixed upon it as long as it was in sight.

But alas for Susie! her mistakes were not over yet, and she had made one now still worse than

the last. She was following the blue car, to be sure, but it was running the wrong way for her. Instead of going up Myrtle Avenue, it was rolling serenely down Fulton Street to the ferry, and every eager step the child took was carrying her farther and farther away from home. She was so confused by all her mishaps that she never thought of up or down: there was only one idea left in her mind, which was that she must follow that particular car. Beyond that she considered nothing.

So she plodded on, feeling very, very tired, but keeping up her courage with the hope of soon being at home. Her fingers, in spite of the Solferino mittens, were stiff with cold, and already beginning to ache with that stinging pain every child can remember; her feet were a little better, thanks to the thick leggins and overshoes, but her nose was frosty, and her cheeks fairly tingled in the keen, cold air to which they had been so long exposed. It was growing colder, too, for she had lost a good deal of time in her expedition down to Catharine Ferry, and the short winter afternoon was fast wearing away.

Susie began to feel, with dismay, how late it

was growing, and she did her best to make haste, not even stopping to look in at any of the large plate-glass windows that displayed gay toys and tempting confectionery to her view. She was very hungry, but she hardly thought of it in her anxiety to get to the end of her journey; and so she kept on without pausing, until her tired feet actually could go no farther, and she was obliged to stop for a few minutes to rest.

People stared at her as she sat on a carriage-block close to the curb-stone, looking so weary and forlorn, but nobody spoke to her. It was cold and late, and every one had his own business to attend to. So the living tide flowed past, and the poor little wanderer dragged herself up after a few minutes' rest, and marched on once more. But she had to stop again soon, for her strength was so spent that she could hardly drag one foot after the other. And worse still, a dreadful fear had begun to creep into her mind. Everything about her was so strange and unfamiliar still; yet surely, before this time, she ought to have got into a neighborhood that she would know. O! could she have gone wrong again, after all?

It was such a terrible thought that it made the

child sick with despair, and she leaned against a lamp-post for a moment, so faint and dizzy that she was afraid of falling. Only for a moment, though. A desperate feeling that she must keep on and know the worst, took possession of her, and she started in a run down the steep sidewalk. A glimpse of water in the distance, and the white sails of ships, made her stop suddenly before she had gone one block, and at the same moment the ding-dong of the boat bell struck upon her ear, leaving no longer a shadow of doubt. She had walked all the way down to Fulton Ferry!

Susie could not remember very distinctly what happened after this. She felt so stunned and hopeless that she walked on as if she had been blind for a few minutes, and was jostled, and pushed, and almost knocked down by the rough men and boys who were hurrying up from the ferry, without making an effort to get out of their way. She found herself, presently, down by the gates, in the midst of the throng pouring off from the boat which had just come in. People were pushing and crowding as if their lives depended upon getting ahead of one another; horses were stamping, and drivers shouting and

•

swearing, and the newsboys deafening one's ears with their shrill cries ; but Susie staggered on, as if she neither saw nor heard anything. She was just stepping forward in front of the great gates, where the long string of carts and carriages were passing through ; they followed one another as fast as possible without regard to foot passengers, and the bewildered child would almost certainly have been knocked down by the horses if somebody in the crowd had not snatched her back.

“ You foolish little thing ! Do you want to get yourself run over and killed ? ”

The voice was not very kind, for the gentleman was provoked by what he thought was such reckless daring on the child's part. But no sweeter music ever rang in poor little Susie Thompson's ears than those rough words ! She turned round with a scream of joy, —

“ O, papa ! papa ! Don't you know me ? I'm Susie ! ”

And in another moment she was clasped tightly in her father's arms, sobbing as if her heart would break in her wild excitement at such unlooked-for relief. You can imagine her father's astonishment, and how everybody stared and wondered at such a scene. Mr. Thompson

did not stop to ask questions, but dashed in front of the horses himself, with Susie in his arms, and sprang into the blue car that stood close by, before she had time to take a breath. The horses started at once, and at last she was really on her way home!

It was a long time before she could lift up her face from her father's shoulder, where she had first hidden it, or quiet her sobbing enough to tell him her pitiful story. When she looked up at last, there was a little warm hand clasping hers, and who should be there but Carrie Pratt, sitting on *her* father's knee, just beside them, and gazing at Susie with the most wondering, and anxious, and compassionate eyes! She was just coming home after her long, happy day, seeing sights in New York, and she little knew how wretchedly the same time had been spent by her playmate, though she saw *something* terrible had happened.

Susie managed to tell her story at last, and every one pitied her so much that she did not get a great deal of scolding, — not half so much as she felt she deserved; especially when they got home, and found her mother almost crazy about her, while all the servants of the house were

roaming the streets, far and near, in search of her.

Susie has had more than one sleigh-ride since, but never another like that. She says she will never forget it as long as she lives ; and I rather think the lesson it taught her will do her good. At any rate, she has never since done anything, of the propriety of which she was not quite sure, without first *asking mamma*.

KITTY'S VALENTINE.

KITTY GRAYSON'S father was the most charming father in the world. At least that was Kitty's firm belief, and I don't deny that she had excellent reasons for it. The lovely picture-books and story-books that crowded the nursery shelves, the innumerable dolls that filled the baby-house, the oranges and sugar-plums that were forever coming home in his pockets, were all arguments in favor of Kitty's theory, that no little girl would have disputed. And in addition to all this, whenever she asked him for a penny, — which she frequently did, in spite of having everything that she could want already, — he gave her two, or five, and sometimes ten. Now, if this was not being charming, I wonder what under the sun *could* be!

It was singular, however, that Kitty's mother was not altogether pleased with Kitty's father, *as* her father. She liked him very much indeed on her own account, but she often said to herself, —

"He will spoil this little girl of ours, I am sadly afraid. It is not good for any one to be so indulged, and it will surely make her selfish and disagreeable in the end."

So in order, if possible, to prevent this unfortunate result, she tried to teach Kitty some lessons of self-denial.

One day the little girl ran into the nursery holding up a tiny square of purplish-looking paper, with a head of Washington on the face, and "25" in large figures on the back. Her mother recognized it as the "fractional currency," supposed to be an improvement on old-fashioned silver quarters, and was not slow to guess how Kitty came by it, even before her triumphant outcry, —

"Just look, mamma! I asked papa for a penny, and he gave me all this — a whole quarter!"

"I dare say he did," said her mother. "You and papa together waste a good deal of money, Miss Kitty."

"But I shan't waste this," said Kitty, "I shall spend it."

"I dare say," her mother repeated. "And what do you propose to buy?"

"A valentine, of course," Kitty replied, promptly. "To-morrow is St. Valentine's Day."

"And what will you do with a valentine?"

"O, I don't know! Have some fun with it — send it to somebody, maybe. Everybody buys valentines."

"I don't think everybody does," her mother answered, quietly. "Very few sensible people do; and if I were in your place, Kitty, I would not throw away twenty-five cents for a thing that can give neither pleasure nor profit to anybody."

"You always say that sort of thing!" exclaimed Kitty, pettishly. "Papa doesn't. He tells me to buy what I please."

"Perhaps he doesn't know that you often please to buy foolish things."

"It is my own money, at any rate," said Kitty, rather sullenly.

"Certainly it is; and I shall not forbid you to spend it for a valentine. I only *advise* you not to, because it will be wasting money that might be spent for a good purpose."

"But there isn't anything else I want," said Kitty.

"Is there no one in the world who *does* want something else?"

Kitty shrugged her shoulders. "I'm sure I don't know," she began, pertly; and just then the baby in the cradle waked up with a cry, and Mrs. Grayson had to take him. So the talk ended.

Kitty slipped out of the room, feeling dissatisfied, and rather uncomfortable, but not at all disposed to give up her own way. She wandered about the house for a while, not knowing what to do with herself, and finally put on her hat and cloak, and went out on the sidewalk. It was pleasant weather for the season, so that several of her playmates were already out, and she was warmly welcomed by the little group. They were tired of playing "tag," and were walking up and down now, with their arms around one another, in little girl fashion; and as fate would have it, the subject of conversation was the very one in which Kitty was so much interested.

Lizzie Tracy's papa had bought her "the most *lovely* valentine," and Josie Ridgeway was going to buy one for herself, and Mamie Burton had been round to Rose's, and, O, you never saw such beauties in all your life! Silver darts sticking through golden hearts, and doves perched upon wreaths of flowers, and the bor-

ders of the paper just like real lace ! and besides that, some of them were so comical you would die laughing ; and wouldn't it be *awful* funny to get one of those ridiculous things, and slip it under Fanny Woodward's door ? She would think Harry Ogden sent it, and, O, wouldn't she be mad ?

With all this silly talk Kitty was greatly amused and interested ; and you may be sure she soon announced the fact that she had twenty-five cents of her own, and could buy a valentine if she chose.

It isn't necessary to say that nobody advised her not to : in fact, it was the general opinion that she could not possibly do better with her money. Josie Ridgeway had ten cents to invest in the same way ; so it was proposed that the whole party should proceed to Rose's immediately, and the proposition was unanimously carried. Kitty had sometimes been allowed to go alone to Rose's fancy store, in Atlantic Street, which was only two or three blocks distant. She did not feel obliged, therefore, to ask her mother's permission, and the last opportunity to profit by her advice was thus avoided.

The four little girls went merrily together to the tempting spot, and were soon in a state of delightful bewilderment, not knowing how to choose from the endless variety that was spread before them. The silver arrows and lace borders were voted "sweet" and "splendid;" but the "comic" style seemed, after all, to be more attractive. The children hovered round the ridiculous caricatures, and laughed over them as much as if they had been really funny, instead of being, as they were, merely coarse. Josie Ridgeway was fascinated by a fat Cupid, dancing on a barrel, with the motto below, —

"Bourbon whiskey and brandy-wine,
You're my sweetest valentine.'

Her ten cents was finally exchanged for that witty work of art; and then Kitty's attention was directed to the picture of a long-nosed and ancient looking maiden lady, in a very low-necked dress, with two extremely sharp elbows sticking out from her short sleeves. Above this interesting portrait was the name, "Miss Fanny Faintaway;" below it were the following irresistible lines: —

"Two beaux Miss Faintaway can show,
And from her side they never go;
Yet still in vain she'll sigh and pine,
She'll never get a Valentine!
For why? The truth is this, my dear,
So sharp her *elbows* do appear,
No other beau dares venture near!"

This pointed joke was considered so very amusing, that Kitty willingly parted with her quarter to become the possessor of Miss Faintaway; and they all went home again in great glee.

The luncheon bell was ringing just as she reached her own door, and she went in to meet her mother with a half ashamed and half defiant feeling. Mrs. Grayson looked at the coarse daub which Kitty held up to her, but made no comment upon it.

"I suppose you are quite satisfied with it, my dear," was all she said; but there was something in her quiet tone that made the little girl feel uncomfortable. *Was* she quite satisfied with it, after all? She began to doubt it, and the more she looked at the coarse, staring thing, the less satisfaction she felt in it.

However, she did not choose to acknowledge

this, even to herself, and the "funny" plan that Mamie Burton had proposed was yet to be carried out. So after lunch, which she did not enjoy as much as usual to-day, in spite of the cold chicken and mince pie, Kitty went up stairs and found an envelope, in which she enclosed Miss Fanny Faintaway. She sealed it up with a fancy motto, and wrote on the outside, —

"To Miss fany wudard.

St. valentine's day."

The bad spelling was intended to be a disguise, and Kitty's playmates were much amused when she took out the precious document for their benefit. Mamie Burton undertook to see it safely delivered; and Kitty laughed in secret all the afternoon, as she thought of Fanny Woodward's vexation when she should open the valentine.

She went out on the sidewalk the next morning, eager to meet the girls and enjoy the fun. But it did not turn out so funnily as she had anticipated. Either Mamie Burton, or some other one of the party, had betrayed her, or else Fanny had guessed at Kitty's handwriting.

However it was, Fanny met her with a very dignified air, and handed back to her the "comic" valentine.

"My mamma doesn't wish to have such vulgar things about the house," she said, with a most stately and "superior" manner. "So I beg leave to return your valentine, Miss Kitty Grayson, and it will save you the trouble of buying another for somebody else."

With which withering speech she went back to her own house, and she never spoke to Kitty again for a fortnight. On the whole, the fun was rather a failure, and Kitty began to wish she had taken her mother's advice when she realized the unpleasant consequences of the joke. She wished it still more by and by, for Fanny's anger was not the worst thing that happened.

One day she had been to Rose's to buy a slate-pencil, and on her way home her attention was attracted by a little girl who sat on a door-step, crying bitterly. The child did not look like a beggar: her clothes were neat, though well worn and patched; and her face had neither the bold nor sly look which are seen so often on these little prematurely old and cunning street beggars. Kitty — a child herself — felt the difference, and

knew the grief, whatever caused it, was genuine.

She stopped, full of pity and concern, — for she was tender-hearted in spite of her self-indulgent habits, — and asked very kindly and sympathizingly what the matter was. In answer came a pitiful story. They had a sick baby at home, the little stranger said, and her mother had sent her to the drug-store with twenty-five cents, to buy some medicine. But the pavement was slippery, and she fell down; the money flew out of her hand, and some bad boys that saw her fall snatched it up before she could reach it, and ran off with it. She ran after them, and cried, and begged them to give it back to her, but they would not listen to her, and she could not overtake them.

“And now I don’t know what to do! I don’t know what to do!” the poor little creature sobbed, in her bitter distress.

Kitty looked at her in sorrowful perplexity. “Why don’t you go home and get some more money?” she asked, presently.

“I can’t!” moaned the child. “There isn’t any more, not till mother gets paid, Saturday night. Mother’s poor, and the man at the drug-

store won't trust her. O, my poor little brother, I know he'll die!"

And the child wrung her hands, and sobbed so pitifully, that Kitty was heart-broken to see her, and to feel that she could not help her. That was the worst of it—the remembrance that she *might* have helped her. If only she had kept that quarter, instead of spending it for the horrid valentine! If only she had listened to her mother's kind advice!

But such wishes were worse than useless now, and Kitty was obliged to pass on, and leave the poor child as wretched as she found her. It never occurred to her to bring her home, and ask her mother to give her the money. At any other time that would have been her first thought; but she was so full of regret and self-reproach in remembering what she might have done herself, if she had not been so wilful, that she could not think of anything else.

So the only opportunity that remained to her was neglected; and she never knew whether the poor little baby lived or died. She thought about it many a time: the picture of the weeping child — no older than herself, but so different! — came up in the midst of her merriest

play, and made her heart ache with a pain that she had never felt before.

It was a pain, however, that had a wholesome effect. She began to see, at last, that living only to please one's self is not at all the best or the happiest life; to comprehend, also, something of her own responsibility in improving the opportunities for doing good that came in her way.

Her mother found her a more willing listener after this, when she suggested some little act of self-denial; and, under her careful guidance, Kitty found so many good uses for the little sums she saved, and so much real pleasure in using them thus, that Mrs. Grayson had soon no fear that her little girl would grow up selfish and disagreeable.

Miss Fanny Faintaway was kept in a drawer, by way of remembrance; and Kitty's Valentine is still preserved as Kitty's first lesson in Moral Responsibility.

SAM'S PUNISHMENT.

SAM and Mattie Gordon were finishing their breakfast one bright summer morning. The extension-table was reduced to its smallest dimensions, and only two cups and saucers appeared on the coffee-tray. These, moreover, were there for ornament rather than use; for Mattie and Sam were the only guests at the table, and the silver cups that stood beside their plates had been replenished from the milk-pitcher, and not the coffee-urn.

"It's rather funny having breakfast all to ourselves," said Mattie presently. "I suppose papa and mamma are a hundred miles away by this time."

"More than that," said Sam, "if they travelled all night, as they meant to. I wonder if Job's troubles are really coming to an end, at last!"

"O, Sam! aren't you ashamed of yourself?" cried Mattie, half laughing, half shocked.

"What for? Isn't his name Job, and hasn't he always been in trouble, with rheumatism or something, ever since we heard of him? I'm sure it's always been 'poor uncle Job' since I could remember."

"Never mind; he's papa's uncle, for all that, and we ought to be respectful," said Mattie, sedately. "The telegram said 'no hope of recovery,' so I suppose he will die before they come back."

"I hope he'll leave me his gold watch," said Sam.

"I'd rather have the old Indian cabinet that I've heard papa talk about, with those wonderful bugs and beetles, you know, and the shells and precious stones. But hurry up, Sam; it's almost school-time. You're not going to eat another egg, surely?"

"Yes, I am;" and Sam broke the shell very deliberately, and took up a pinch of salt between his thumb and forefinger, indifferent, in the absence of his elders, to breakfast-table proprieties.

"I'm going to eat another egg, and I'm not going to school: there are two facts for you, Miss Martha Jane."

"Not going to school! Why, Sam, did mamma say we were not to go? She didn't tell *me*."

"She didn't exactly tell *me*," said Sam, shaking the pepper-box over his egg-glass, "but I don't have to be told everything under the sun before I can understand, as you do, Mattie."

"I don't know what you mean," said Mattie, doubtfully.

"Of course you don't. That's just what I said. You never know how to think for yourself about anything."

"But, Sam, I know what mamma told me. It was to 'go on just the same way as if she were at home,' and I certainly can't see how that means staying from school."

"I know what she told me, too. It was to 'take care of my sister, and look after things.' Which meant, of course, that I should stop at home to protect the house, and see any people that came on business, and—and all that sort of thing. Anybody—except some one as stupid as you, Mattie—could see at once that it wouldn't be proper for us to go to school, and leave no one but servants in the house all the while papa and mamma are away."

"I can't see why it should be improper," Mattie persisted.

"Let me see for you, then," observed Sam, with a grand air. "You can't help it, I suppose, if you *are* a little bit stupid, Patsy Anne."

"Your calling me stupid so many times doesn't prove that I am," retorted Mattie, rather indignantly. "It's not very kind of you, at any rate, Sam; and my name isn't Patsy Anne, or Martha Jane, either."

"So it isn't, Mattykin, and I won't call you so any more, if you'll be a good girl. Come up stairs and help me finish my kite, that's a good old Mat; and then I'll lend you my color-box to paint your paper dolls. Come along: it'll be a great deal nicer than going to school."

"I dare say; but I'm going to school all the same," answered Mattie, getting up from the table. "I don't think papa and mamma intended for us to stay away; and I don't think we have any right to, of ourselves. Indeed, I'm very sure we haven't," she repeated, decidedly, "and so you must do as you please, Sam, but *I* am going to school."

"Go on, then, and be hateful and disobliging. It's just like you!" exclaimed Sam, angrily. "You're so conceited that nobody can tell you anything. You think you know better than all the world." _

“An the world,” in this case, meaning only Sam Gordon, — who, being her twin-brother, was exactly the same age with herself, and failed in his lessons quite as often, to say the least, as she did. Mattie could not see why she had not as good a right to an opinion as Sam. He had just told her, besides, that she never knew how to think for herself; and yet, now that she *did* think, he was angry.

She did not tell him this, however. She only began to say, —

“I am very sorry, Sam; indeed I don’t wish to be disobliging —”

But he interrupted her with another angry exclamation, pushed his chair back to the wall with a great bang, and marched out of the room. Mattie stood still for a minute or two after he had left her, feeling very much distressed and perplexed. It was so unpleasant to vex Sam, and yet she felt so sure she was right, that she could not bring herself to give up the point, even for the sake of humoring him.

“I do wish that papa and mamma had not been obliged to hurry off so last night,” she said to herself. “There was no time to give us any directions; and if Sam and I are going to think

differently about everything, it will certainly be very hard. Well, I can't help it. It's time to go to school now, at any rate, and *I know* I ought to go."

So she collected her books without any further pondering, and started off for school. Once there, there was no time to fret herself with thinking of Sam's unkind speeches, and his loneliness at home without her. Lessons had to be attended to, and the day passed by busily and happily, as it generally does when one has a clear conscience, and knows one is doing what is right.

The case was different with Sam. In spite of his confident assertions, he did not feel altogether at ease in his own mind, and consequently everything he attempted to do proved unsatisfactory. He went up to the attic, which had been given to the children for their play-room, and began to make a tail for his kite. But he was not accustomed to do anything by himself: Mattie was always at hand, to help or to hinder, as the case might be; and though he hectored her not a little, and called her "stupid" on the least provocation, still he found, when she was gone, that she was very good company indeed.

Making kite-tails all alone was an uninteresting amusement, so he soon gave it up, and went down stairs again, to look for a book. There was nothing new, however. All his own books, and Mattie's, had been read through more than once, and he looked in vain upon his father's book-shelves for something that would amuse him. Herndon's *Amazon* and Livingston's *Africa* were tried in turn, and each thrown aside. Finally he fell back upon *The Young Marooners*, which he had read twice already, and contrived to get rid of half an hour in following the adventures of Harold and Robert in their desert island.

At the end of this time he concluded that he felt hungry, and he would have some luncheon, — not a common, every-day, bread-and-butter luncheon, — he had no appetite for that, which was not surprising, considering the three eggs, the muffins, and the radishes which he had disposed of at breakfast only two hours ago. Some almonds, and a bunch of raisins, or a piece of candied citron — perhaps a slice of fruit-cake, if there should happen to be a loaf that was cut; these were the dainties that suggested themselves to Master Sam's mind, and he went

down to the dining-room to find the key of a certain closet which he knew contained a store of such things.

This key was put away carefully, in an inner drawer of the sideboard ; for, besides the store of sweets which the closet contained, there was also a quantity of old-fashioned silver put there for safe keeping. It was family silver, handed down for three generations ; and besides being valuable in itself, was especially prized by Mrs. Gordon for the sake of the associations connected with it. The key would probably have been laid in some still more secure place if Mrs. Gordon had remembered it, but in the hurry of her unexpected departure it was not thought of ; so it still lay in the sideboard drawer, where Sam had often seen his mother put it, and he got possession of it without any difficulty.

It occurred to him, as he stood in the closet helping himself liberally to the various delicacies around him, that he was not generally allowed the freedom of those shelves. The nuts and fruit that he and Mattie occasionally had for their school luncheon were dispensed by their mother's hand, not taken at their own discretion. They were never sent to that closet on any

errand whatever, and Mattie certainly would never have gone to it in her mother's absence. Sam could not help thinking so as he stood there, and for a moment a good impulse came to him to put back the cluster of raisins untasted, lock the door, and restore the key to its hiding-place.

"But that's all nonsense," he said to himself, resisting the voice of conscience. "Mattie's a little goose, and never dares to do anything without permission. But I'm the master of the house while papa's away, and I've a right to help myself to a few nuts, if I please. There's no harm in it."

So the good impulse was checked by the same false reasoning with which he had satisfied himself in the morning. He crammed his pockets with whatever he fancied—prunes, figs, raisins—dipped his fingers into various jars of preserved ginger and foreign sweetmeats, and finally returned to the parlor to finish his refreshment at his leisure, beside the open window. The closet was left unlocked, with the key in the door, and Sam thought no more of it from that time forward.

Later in the day a man came by with a bill-hook in his hand.

"Have your grass cut, sir?" he inquired of Sam, who still lounged at the parlor window. "Do it nice, and do it cheap, if you'll give me the job, sir."

"How cheap?" asked Sam. "I guess it does need cutting, out in the back yard, and I don't know but I'll employ you," he added, importantly. Here was a fine opportunity to prove to Mattie that his presence at home was necessary.

"Are you the boss?" asked the man, looking up curiously at the boy's consequential tone.

"I am the master of the house while my father is away," Sam replied, still more grandly. "How much will you charge for cutting the grass?"

"That depends upon how much you've got to cut. I'll have to see it, sir, before I can tell you."

"Come in the house, then, this way; and you can go through into the back yard."

Sam went to the front door as he spoke, and let the man in. He had no business to do it, the basement door, of course, being the proper entrance for such a person. "But it's too much trouble to go down stairs," he thought. "He

can just as well go through the hall." So the dusty boots were marched across the handsome hall carpet, past the closet door with the key in it, which the man took notice of, though Sam did not, and on through the piazza, out into the back yard.

There the bargain was soon concluded—the man charging double what the work was worth, for he was quick enough to see the inexperience of his employer. Sam, quite unconscious of that, felt very self-satisfied and important. He was a person of authority; he was discharging the duties of his position; he should be able to tell Mattie, triumphantly, that he "had had to see a person on business, and it was quite lucky that he had not gone to school."

In the midst of these self-complacent thoughts, the grass-cutter, whose work was done very rapidly at least, if not very thoroughly, came up the steps of the piazza, and demanded his fee. Sam put his hand in his pocket, then remembered that all the money in the house was up stairs in the market-purse.

"You'll have to wait a minute, till I go up stairs," he said. "I've no money about me."

"All right, sir; I'm not in a hurry," was the

answer; and the man stepped forward into the hall, leaning his back against the closet door, while Sam went up to get the money. He thought he knew exactly where to find it, but when he opened the drawer where the market-purse was kept, it was not to be seen. He rummaged about, upsetting all the papers and account-books, and loosening packages of receipted bills, in a vain expectation of finding it hidden under them. But still it did not appear, and some five minutes were wasted in the fruitless search before he remembered that the cook had probably gone out to do the marketing, and taken the purse with her.

“How provoking!” he exclaimed, impatiently. “Now what am I going to do, I wonder? I suppose I shall have to tell him to wait, or to come again. What a bother!”

But there was no help for it; so he went down again to arrange the matter as well as he could. He had left the man in the hall, but no man was there now, to his surprise; neither was he in the piazza. There were the tracks of his dirty feet; there were a few withered blades of grass,—tokens of his presence, indeed,—but the man himself had disappeared utterly!

"He must be in the kitchen, of course," thought Sam, and down he went. But he was not there, nor yet in the back yard. No sign of him anywhere about, and no one had seen him go out of the house; yet gone he was, most certainly, out of sight and out of sound! It was very mysterious, and Sam was exceedingly perplexed.

"I only hope he hasn't carried off anything, Master Sam," said Anne, the housemaid. "It wasn't safe at all, going up stairs and leaving him there all alone; he a strange man, too!"

"That's nonsense," said Sam, hastily. "What *could* he carry off, I'd like to know, in such a minute of time?"

"If he could carry himself off, he could carry something else," retorted Anne. "Them fellers is sharp as a meat-axe, and I'll bet he never went empty-handed. I'm going to see, anyhow."

She started up stairs, and Bridget, the cook, who had just come in, followed after her. Sam came behind, feeling nervous and anxious in spite of himself; and he was not reassured by Anne's outcry, as soon as she reached the top of the stairs, —

"The hall closet's open! O, my blessed goodness! He's been at the silver!"

Poor Sam! it flashed over him instantly that he had never locked that door, never taken out the key, never thought of it, in fact, since he helped himself to the sweetmeats in the morning. And the silver, the precious old family silver, that his mother prized so dearly!

He gave one bound, rushed past Bridget, and tore open the closet door before Anne had attempted to do it. Alas, the terrible fear was too true! The quaint, pretty old silver porringers, the pair of heavy salt-cellars, the cream-jug, the sugar-tongs, and the spoons, were all gone! In forlorn stateliness stood the two tea-pots, and the cake-basket; *they* were safe on account of their size; but all the small articles, everything that could possibly be stuffed into pockets, or hidden in a hat-crown, or tucked under a coat, had disappeared!

Sam felt stunned and bewildered, as if some one had knocked him down suddenly. Anybody *might* have knocked him down, indeed, with a feather, as he realized, at last, the consequences of his misconduct. He looked so pale and horror-stricken, as he stood dumb before the door, that Anne had no need to ask how the closet came to be open. She turned upon him with a torrent of reproach.

"It's you that did it, Master Sam, as it's easy to see by the face of yur. And what business had yur in the closet, I'd like to know, when it's never allowed to go into it yur are?"

"I thought — I intended — I forgot to lock it!" stammered Sam, wretchedly.

"And what was yur after at all?" screamed Bridget, angrily. "Why isn't it at school yur are, like yur sister? And who gave yur leave to be meddling with the raisins and swate stuffs that yur mother never lets yur go to?"

"That's true for yur," chimed in Anne. "He had a right to be at school this blessed day, and I heard Miss Mattie tryin' to coax him to go. But he's so full of his conceit — he thinks he knows so much better than she does — when she's got more sense in her little finger than he has all over, as any fool may see!"

"It's a pretty kettle o' fish he's cooked for himself now," said Bridget, grimly. "I wouldn't be in his shoes when his father comes home. An' serve him right, too."

Sam had not a word to answer to the scolding of the servants. They were honest, faithful women, who had lived for years in the family, and Mrs. Gordon trusted them with everything in the

house. They were proud of her trust, and felt all the more bitterly an affair like this, which would seem to be a reflection upon their carefulness; though they were, of course, not in the least to blame, as Sam knew well, for he had taken very good pains that neither Anne nor Bridget should see him get the key.

He broke away from them at last, and rushed up to his own room, where he shut himself in, and gave way to a passion of grief and despair. O, if he only had locked the closet and put away the key! If he had never thought about getting the raisins! If he had but gone to school with Mattie in the morning! Too late he saw that here was where his wrong-doing had begun. If he had not chosen, in a fit of laziness and self-indulgence, to stay at home, persuading himself that it was right, when Mattie and his own conscience both told him it was wrong, none of all this trouble would have happened. But one fault led to another. First idleness, then disobedience, then dishonesty, then carelessness, and he saw, too late, alas! how great the faults were, that he had not recognized as faults at all, until their bitter punishment overtook him.

Mattie came home from school with the usual

cheerful and contented look on her face. She had only one little uneasiness, and that was the wonder if Sam had got over his vexation with her. To settle this as speedily as possible, she went to look for him as soon as she had put away her bonnet and books. He heard her voice in the upper hall, calling his name, and wretched as he was, it gave him a sense of relief. Much as he had snubbed his little sister, he depended upon her more than he knew. She might think of something to help him out of his trouble, he thought; at any rate it would be some comfort to tell her about it, and he knew from *her* he would get nothing but tender pity.

Which was true indeed. She was heart-broken when she heard the sad story, and with all her might she pitied him, and grieved with him, and never once said, "I told you so!" as she might have done very naturally.

Moreover her good sense suggested the quickest plan for relief from his unhappy state of mind, which was, to write at once to his mother, and tell her the whole story, instead of waiting until her return to make the dreadful disclosure. Sam would never have thought of that himself, but he saw at once the wisdom of immediate

confession, — or “having the worst over with,” as he phrased it, — after his sister had shown it to him!

So they wrote the letter together with much painstaking and deliberation. But the truth was told plainly, without any attempt to excuse Sam, — only that Mattie added a private postscript afterwards, to the effect that, —

“Poor Sam didn’t mean to do anything wrong, and he was so very, *very* sorry and ashamed! Wouldn’t dear papa and mamma please not to be very angry with him, but just pity him a little? He was *so* miserable, and so was their poor little Mattie, who was sure that Sam would *never* be naughty again.”

It was not a very comfortable letter for Mrs. Gordon to read, as you can imagine. She had kept watch for three days and nights beside a death-bed, and had just closed poor uncle Job’s eyes for their last dreamless sleep, when the letter was brought to her. The tears that she shed were not for the poor old man who had gone to his rest, leaning trustfully upon his Savior’s love; they were all for the boy who

had his life yet before him, to mend or to mar, who was so easily tempted from the path of duty, and might still fall into so many grievous errors and dangers. The loss of the silver was no small pain, but the feeling that Sam, her only son, was so little to be trusted, gave her a far keener pang. And that sorrowful night was spent in earnest prayer, that this hard lesson might be so stamped upon the boy's heart that he should remember it for a warning all the days of his life. The silver would be well lost, she thought in her heart, if its loss were the means of making Sam a conscientious and trustworthy boy.

She told him this in her answer to his letter, and it was the first gleam of real comfort that he had found since his trouble began. It showed him how his grief and punishment could be turned into a blessing; and he vowed in his heart then,—and asked God on his knees to help him keep the vow,—that he would never rest till he became what his mother wished. It was the first earnest purpose he had ever set before him, the first real prayer he had ever offered; and our Father in heaven is quick to hear and help us in all such.

“God sees from his high blue heaven —
He sees the grape in the flower;” —

and sunshine and shower are never lacking to bring it to perfection.

The fine old silver was never recovered; but as time went by, and Sam's good resolutions were put into practice, proved and tried by temptation, and found steadfast, his mother felt that something had been given her in its stead more precious than silver or gold; for as “a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother,” so is a wise and good son the joy of her heart, and her life's great comfort.

RUSSELL'S PAINT-BOX.

DING-DONG! the old bell at the police station was ringing out twelve, and, as its last stroke swung upon the air, a crowd of boys poured out into the playground of the big public school on the avenue below. It was the dinner recess, and a great number of little baskets, and tin pails, and sandwich-boxes came to light suddenly, as their owners scattered round in various directions, some in groups to enjoy their luncheon together, others off in a corner to dispose of it in solitude.

"Come, Cleve," said one of a group of boys, who had seated themselves in a shady place under the fence, "trot out that basket of yours, and let's see what kind of a spread you've got to-day. Your mother's a trump, I say; she always gets you up such jolly good lunches."

"Well, so she does," answered Cleve, laughing. "I'm her only chick, you know, and she naturally doesn't want me to starve."

"That's what makes her so liberal on the *chicken*, I s'pose," said another boy, helping himself without ceremony to a large slice of breast which lay uppermost in the basket. "There's plenty more, I know, old fellow, and it will help my bread and butter along amazingly."

"Take another," responded Cleve, good-naturedly. "There's some crullers down below there, and some little tarts and things, too, I guess. Help yourself;" and his basket was handed in turn to each of his companions, until the dainties prepared by Mrs. Morris for her only darling were in a fair way of being more generally distributed than she had anticipated.

"You're a lucky fellow," said Russell Holmes, taking possession of a cranberry tart, and biting into it with great satisfaction. "I think *I'm* well off if I get a doughnut, or a piece of apple-pie, for goodies; but your basket is equal to a baker's shop."

"O, I don't care much about it," answered Cleve, carelessly. "I'd just as soon not have all this stuff; and as to being lucky, that's a great mistake. I'm just the unluckiest fellow in the world --- always losing something or other.

Last week it was my four-bladed knife, and now I've lost two shillings out of my pocket, because that old peg-top had to poke a hole in it. It was all the money I had, besides, and I can't have any more till next month."

"Why not?" asked Russell.

"O, because I have an allowance, you know, and my father never will let me go over it. It's no use asking, so I'm dead broke till May. By the way, Russell, I was at your house yesterday. You didn't see anything of a stray quarter lying around after I went away — did you? I missed it last night, so I must have lost it in the afternoon somewhere."

"I guess you didn't lose it at our house," said Russell, confidently. "I should have seen it somewhere if you had. You were only in the yard, and up in my garret, you know — and I didn't see a sign of it."

"Well, it's just my luck!" cried Cleve, gayly. "It's no use crying, though; so come on, boys, and let's play hookey! Dick Foster, I owe you one! Look out for your shins now, old fellow!"

He made a flourish with his hookey-stick that sent the ball spinning half across the playground,

and Dick Foster and the rest, scrambling to their feet, were soon after it in hot pursuit.

There was no more said about the lost money. The other boys forgot it, and Cleve Morris, a careless, easy, generous fellow, was too much accustomed to such losses to think long about this. He laughed over his poverty when his slate-pencils and top-strings gave out, and he became bankrupt in marbles; but he managed to get on till the end of the month without borrowing a penny, though he had many offers of small loans, being generally popular among his companions. To reward him for such virtue, his mother added a generous gift on her own account to his father's allowance when May came; and Cleve, in his unexpected riches, declared that his losing the quarter was a "stroke of good luck," after all.

Russell Holmes listened enviously as his schoolfellow boasted of his good fortune, and showed his handful of jingling silver pieces to the boys in the playground.

"Just like *him*," he muttered to himself as he went home after school, still dwelling upon the thought that had been in his mind all the afternoon: "I wonder when *my* mother would have

given me a dollar for such a thing? But he gets everything he wants, and is even paid for losing his money! I don't think it's fair."

Russell could not have given a very good reason for not thinking it "fair," considering that Mrs. Morris had certainly the right to use her own money as she pleased. But, in his grumbling mood, he did not stop to be logical.

"There's that paint-box," he began again, "that I've been wanting so long, and my father won't give me. It's only two shillings, and Fricke would let me have it for twenty cents. But, no! my father can't afford it, he says. He never can afford anything I want, and I think it's real mean."

Again Russell did not consider how unreasonable he was. There were a great many little children at Mr. Holmes's; Russell was the oldest of eight brothers and sisters, and he knew very well that his parents had hard work, with their moderate means, to provide comfortably for them all. He knew, too, that his father indulged him in everything he could possibly afford, and that none of the other children had as much pocket-money, or as many playthings, as himself. It was especially selfish and un-

grateful in *him* to think such things, but he was just in the humor not to care how wicked he was; and he fairly grumbled himself, as he stood by the toy-shop window, where the coveted paint-box lay, into the belief that he was a most unhappy and ill-used boy.

By the time he reached home, he was, of course, not a very pleasant companion for anybody. His mother looked up from her sewing with a smile and a kind word as he came into the nursery, and little Essie ran eagerly to give her "big budder" a kiss. But he took no notice of either one, only slammed his books down upon the closet-shelf, and stalked sulkily out of the room without speaking.

He went first up into the garret, which was a general play-room for all the children, though Russell, as the oldest, claimed chief possession, and always spoke of it as "*my* garret." He found the twins—Frank and Wilson—there, busy making a kite out of some tissue-paper which he recognized as his own property. At any other time he would have allowed them to use it without any reproof. But an evil spirit had control of him to-day, and made him do mean and unkind things, which he blushed to remember afterwards.

“What are you doing with my paper, I’d like to know? Who gave you leave to touch it, sir?” were the angry questions with which the poor little fellows were greeted. “I’ll teach you how to meddle with my things another time! Now see!”

And before they knew what he meant, the poor little pink kite, which Frank and Wilson had been laboring over for an hour, was torn into twenty pieces by their brother’s hands.

He went down into the yard after this, leaving the children sobbing over their disappointment and his unkindness. He felt more miserable than ever, and did not know at all what to do with himself; so, for want of occupation, he began to poke holes into the ground with an old walking-stick of his father’s that the little ones used for a hobby-horse.

“You shouldn’t do that, Russell,” said the nurse, who was sitting on the terrace above him with the baby in her arms. “There’s seeds coming up in them beds, and you’ll kill ’em all if you do so.”

“It’s none of your business if I do!” Russell answered, rudely, and went on poking holes, to finish the figure of a half moon. But the cane

struck suddenly against something hard, and stooping down to see what it was, he found a small, round piece of metal, which, all crusted with mud as it was, the boy knew instantly to be a silver quarter. His first impulse was to hide it from the nurse who was watching him; so, closing his hand over it carefully, he got up again, struck the cane into the ground once or twice, and then throwing it down in the path, sauntered out through the garden gate into the street.

Some secret instinct made him avoid observation; so he walked on down the street until he was quite out of sight of his own house, and then crossed over to a vacant lot, and sat down on a stone behind the fence, before he ventured to examine his treasure openly. It was covered with crusted mud, but he easily scraped that off with his penknife, and then it showed fairly what it was—a good, genuine silver coin.

“Yes, it is certainly good money,” said Russell to himself. “What a lucky find! Now I shall buy that paint-box.”

But he did not seem in a hurry to go and do it.

He sat upon the stone, and fingered the quar-

ter in a nervous sort of way, looking round him suspiciously now and then to see if anybody was coming near him, and muttering excuses to himself, that proved his conscience was not altogether easy. The truth was, he knew perfectly well he had no right to spend the money; that it was the very piece Cleve Morris had lost two weeks ago, and that it was his bounden duty, therefore, to restore it immediately.

He knew what he *ought* to do, but he was extremely unwilling; and, on the other hand, he could not easily make up his mind to do what he knew would be a dishonest thing. If there had only been any doubt in his mind about the ownership of the quarter, he could have contented himself readily. But Cleve had a trick of drawing flags on everything that belonged to him — “his mark,” he called it; and here it was plain enough — a tiny Union flag, traced with something sharp on a smooth spot of the coin. There was no getting over such evidence as that, and Russell could only think of the old school-boy sophistry, that if a thing was lost, it belonged to the finder.

Poor as the argument was, the longer he dwelt upon it, the more plausible it seemed to him.

Other thoughts came to help it out, too. Cleve had forgotten all about the quarter, — he had plenty of money now, more than he needed, — he had given this up for lost, — and what was the use of saying anything about it after all this time? What good did it do anybody lying in the ground? It might be there still, if it wasn't for him, and after he had taken the trouble to find it, why, he had the best right to use it, of course!

Poor Russell! he did not see, in his eagerness to yield to temptation, how silly he was, as well as dishonest. It was small "trouble" he had taken to find the quarter; but it helped to soothe his conscience to imagine that the finding of it was an act of merit for which he deserved reward.

He got up at last, and walked down the street, not towards home, but towards the toy-shop on Myrtle Avenue. He had not made up his mind to buy the paint-box yet, but he thought he would like to see it again, and he wanted a new slate-pencil, besides. Mr. Fricke thought he was a very long time deciding upon that latter article. He turned over every pencil in the box, measuring one by another, and then examined the

painted ones, and then wanted to see those that were enclosed in wood, like lead-pencils, and finally took a yellow soapstone after all. This matter settled, and his penny paid, he still hung around the shop as if something else was on his mind.

"Want anything more?" asked Mr. Fricke, who was getting a little tired of his customer.

"No-o," said Russell, hesitatingly, "I guess not. I don't know, though—let me see that paint-box again, won't you? the one you said I could have for twenty cents."

"For twenty-*five* cents, you mean," said Mr. Fricke, with emphasis. "That's the very lowest price, and it's cheap at that. These are first-class colors, Mr. Russell."

He brought out the paint-box, drew off the sliding cover, and displayed all the little squares of color, and the tiny hair-pencils, to Russell's longing eyes. Can you wonder that his last scruples vanished before the sight? Temptation got the upper hand of conscience, and in another minute the quarter—Cleve's quarter—jingled down amongst other coin in Mr. Fricke's till, while Russell, with his heart beating a good deal louder than usual, bore away his treasure,

wrapped in paper, and tucked out of sight in his deepest pocket.

He did not feel like stopping to play with the boys on his way home. He hurried on as fast as he could, and ran to the garret as soon as he reached the house. The shreds of pink tissue-paper still lay on the floor, but his little brothers had gone, and no one was there to see him. So he ventured to take off the wrapping-paper, and look at his box — the precious box, for which he had paid such a heavy price.

He began to feel already that the price was more than the possession; that he had given treasure for a trifle. As indeed he had, — *his honesty* and *his peace of mind*: two treasures that, if he had only been wise enough to know it, were worth more to him than all the color-boxes the world ever saw. Some dim consciousness of this truth came to him as he looked down at the box, with a suspicion that the cakes of paint looked dingier, and the brushes smaller, than when they were in the shop. But it was too late now to be sorry; so he struggled against the better feeling, and tried to make himself believe that he had done quite right, and would do it again if the same thing happened. But he

did not do any painting that afternoon, although he staid up in the garret till the bell rang for tea. He did not bring the box down stairs either, but hid it away carefully amongst his own peculiar possessions that nobody ever meddled with. He had no wish to show it and tell how he came by it.

So there it lay, day after day ; and for all the pleasure Russell had in it, it might as well have been in the shop-window still. He hardly ever dared to take it out, for there were so many children always running up and down ; and if they ever guessed that Russell was in the garret, they were sure to be there, too. Once or twice he got a chance to paint a picture or two in his old geography without interruption ; but it was dull fun, after all, with no one to look on and make suggestions as to whether the sailor-boys should have blue jackets and white trousers, or *vice versa*, and whether the tigers should be painted with chrome yellow or ochre. Before the week was out, he wished, in his seeret heart, though he would not own it to himself, that the paint-box was back in Fricke's shop, and the quarter in Cleve Morris's pocket, or else in the ground where he found it.

He had more reason to wish it than he was aware of, for the punishment of his dishonesty was close at hand. It had never occurred to him that anybody could discover it unless he chose to tell, and it was only his own accusing conduct which troubled him — not any fear of outside disgrace. But that came, too, in a way he had never anticipated.

One day, at recess, Dick Foster pulled a piece of money out of his pocket. "Look here, Cleve," said he, "isn't this your mark?"

"So it is!" exclaimed Cleve, after he had looked at it a moment. "My mark, and my money, too! It's the very quarter I lost in April, and I'd just like to know how *you* came by it?"

"Fair and square," said Dick. "I got it at Fricke's last night, in change for a half; and I knew it must have passed through your hands some time or other, when I saw the old Star-spangled — long may she wave!"

"You hit the mark," said Cleve, thoughtfully. "I certainly scratched that flag there — it's certainly my quarter."

"Not quite!" cried Dick, laughingly. "It's *my* quarter now, so fork it over, old fellow!"

"O, of course!" and Cleve tossed the coin back into Foster's hands. "I'm curious to know how Fricke got it, though; I could swear it was the very one I lost out of my last month's allowance."

"Some fellow found it, I suppose, and was mean enough to spend it."

"Think so? I'll stop at Fricke's after school and ask him. I'd just like to know if any of *our* fellows would do such a shabby trick."

The two boys moved away, and Russell, who had been standing out of sight, but in full hearing, heard no more. I need not tell you how he felt. It is easy to imagine his shame and confusion, and the terror that filled his mind as he thought how Cleve would be sure to trace the quarter to him, and expose him before all his schoolmates. Never in his life had he spent so wretched an afternoon, never so learned by heart the bitter fact that "*the way of the transgressor is hard.*"

As for Cleve, in his careless way, he forgot all about the thing, until in going home he had to pass by the toy-shop. Then it came back to him, and, "just for curiosity," he went in to make his inquiries. Mr. Fricke remembered

the coin. He had noticed the flag on it when it was given to him. Russell Holmes paid it in exchange for a paint-box about a week ago.

“All right,” said Cleve. “It was only to settle a little dispute that I wanted to know.”

And he walked out of the shop. But once outside, it was not so easy to restrain his honest indignation and contempt. He never could have done such a thing himself, and it was hard to have patience with such meanness in one whom he had supposed his friend, and with whom he had always shared freely his own luxuries. If he had obeyed his first impulse, called out by these thoughts, he would have told the story to the whole school, and justified himself by declaring that “it served him right; such a mean trick ought to be known.”

But a second thought came, and something — he could not tell what — made him think of the prayer which his mother had taught him when he was a little child, and which he still repeated every day of his life, — “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive —”

“Well,” thought Cleve, “I guess I won’t show him up, after all. Maybe he didn’t really know it was mine, and he never has much money of

his own,—that's one excuse for him, at any rate. I wish I hadn't found it out, that's all."

Russell came to school the next day with fear and trembling. He knew directly from Cleve's manner, though not a word was said, that the truth was discovered; and he expected nothing less than to hear it told publicly, to Dick Foster and the rest, as soon as recess came. But to his intense surprise and relief, the play-hours passed by without the dreaded disclosure. Cleve was a little cool, to be sure,—so was Dick Foster,—but it was nothing that any one else would notice, and all the rest were just the same to him. He began to comprehend, at last, the generosity with which his companion was treating him. It was almost harder to bear than public shame would have been, his own meanness looked so black by contrast; and that night, when he went to bed, he fairly cried himself to sleep with sorrow and humiliation.

The next day a good impulse came to him, which he obeyed before it had time to cool. He wrapped up the paint-box, and wrote a little note to Cleve, begging him to take it, because he had no money to pay him with, and confessing how

and when he had found the quarter. He carried these to Mrs. Morris's house and left them, and when Cleve came home and found them, you may be sure he was glad that he had kept to his kind conclusion. He didn't rest until he had seen Russell, and assured him that "he did not care about it, not the least in the world, and they would say no more about it, but just be as good friends as ever."

And he was as good as his word. More than that, when Christmas came, he sent him the identical paint-box, as good as ever, for a present. As for Russell, he took the lesson to heart, and from that time never thought that anything in the world was worth having, if it had to be purchased at the expense of honesty.

BESSIE'S FRIEND.

I WISH I *could* go to see Julia Sherman — I don't see why I mightn't, mamma, I'm sure!"

It was Bessie Henshaw — a little girl whose face would have been pretty and sweet if it had not been disfigured just then by a very decided pout on the lips — who made this remark. She was standing by the nursery window, drumming on the pane in a most uncomfortable state of mind; for her mother, as Bessie thought, was very unkind indeed. Julia Sherman was one of her schoolmates, and had asked her to spend the afternoon with her; and Bessie had promised to do so, taking her mother's permission for granted; but when she came to ask it, merely as a matter of form, Mrs. Henshaw quietly and firmly said, "No."

"I do not wish you to be intimate with Julia Sherman," she went on to say. "You have to meet her at school, and will, of course, always

be kind to her there. But I cannot let you go to her house, and I would rather not have her here again. She is not a good companion for my daughter."

"I wonder *why?*" was Bessie's fretful exclamation. "The other girls go to see her; I don't see why *I* can't as well as they."

"I cannot help what the other girls do, and it is none of my business," said Mrs. Henshaw. "But it *is* my business to see that my little daughter's good manners are not corrupted by evil communications."

"I don't get any evil communications from her," said Bessie, sullenly. "She's just as good as I am — *now!*"

"Perhaps so," Mrs. Henshaw answered, quietly. "You are not a model of good manners at this present moment, Bessie; still, I hope you have not yet learned to tell falsehoods, and take things that do not belong to you, as Julia Sherman does."

Bessie longed to say, "O, mamma! Julia Sherman *doesn't*;" but she knew too well that the charge was true. She remembered more than one occasion, when Julia had been there, and taken oranges from the nursery closet when

there were no grown people by, and pulled June apples in the garden, making Bessie promise not to tell. Only the last time she was at the house, Mrs. Henshaw had detected her in the act of helping herself to some jelly that had been left on the sideboard in the dining-room, where the children had been allowed to play; and from that time she decided to break up the intimacy as soon as possible.

The little girl knew that the case was hopeless, as her mother laid her work down and went out of the room after these last words. If she had been a reasonable little girl, she would have given it up quietly, and amused herself in some other way, trusting that her mother knew best what was good for her. But I am sorry to say that Bessie was not always a reasonable little girl, and in this matter she behaved very foolishly indeed; for she put her head down upon the window-sill, and cried with disappointment and vexation, thinking her mother excessively strict, and herself very ill used.

The door-bell rang in the midst of this performance, and Bessie, in spite of her misery, had curiosity enough to peep over the banisters, and see who had come. It was only an aggravation

to see that there were visitors for Mrs. Henshaw, and to hear the sound of their cheerful voices in the parlor below. She went back to her place by the window, feeling "crosser" than ever.

"It's real mean, I do declare!" she exclaimed, aloud. "Mamma can have company as much as she pleases, and she doesn't care how lonely I am up here. I say it's too bad!"

"So it is!" exclaimed another voice, over her shoulder; and Bessie jumped with astonishment, as well she might, for there stood Julia Sherman herself, close beside her!

"Did you think I was a ghost?" she said, laughing at Bessie's startled look.

"How did you get in?" exclaimed Bessie. "When the bell rang, just now?"

"No, indeed! It was some ladies that came in then. I saw them; and one was that horrid Mrs. Chauncey. She hates me, and I hate her, so I took care to keep out of her way."

"I don't think Mrs. Chauncey's horrid," said Bessie. "She is always very kind to me when I go to see Pauline and Amy."

"She was *anything* but kind to me when I went," retorted Julia. "And so I hate her."

She forgot to explain that her own misconduct

was the cause of Mrs. Chauncey's unkindness, so called. But Bessie guessed at the truth, and did not pursue the subject.

"How did you get in?" she asked again, repeating her first question.

"Through the basement; how stupid you are!" answered Julia, sharply. "Your cook let me in, and I came after you, to take you home with me. What kept you so long, anyway?"

"I couldn't go," said Bessie, plaintively, "and I can't now."

"Why not, I wonder? What's the matter with you? You've been crying, I do believe!"

"O, mamma won't let me go to see you this afternoon," said Bessie, ready to cry again. "That's what the matter is, and I think it's real mean."

"And so do I!" cried Julia, angrily. "What's the reason she won't let you?"

"O, because — I don't know — because she won't," Bessie answered, hesitatingly, unwilling to give the true reason of her mother's refusal.

"It's just because she doesn't like me," Julia exclaimed, her face getting red with passion. "I don't like *her*, either, one bit! *My* mother isn't half so cross. I mean to go home, and never come here again!"

And she sprang towards the door ; but Bessie caught hold of her dress in dismay, and begged her not to go. She was frightened at Julia's anger, and not willing to lose her company, now that she had come so unexpectedly.

"Don't go, Julia, please don't," she pleaded. "It isn't true that mamma doesn't like you. She likes you as well as any of the girls."

"Then why won't she let you come to see me?" asked Julia, still angrily, but stepping back a little. "I've been here three dozen times since you were at our house. You never come."

"What nonsense — three dozen!" laughed Bessie.

"Well, never mind, often enough. And now I want to know why you are not to come."

"Mamma has got company this afternoon," said Bessie, giving the only excuse she could think of, "and I must stay in the nursery till they are gone."

"What for? Why can't Bridget be here?"

"O, I guess she's gone out; I don't know," Bessie answered, hastily, getting anxious to change the subject. She knew she was not telling the strict truth, by any means. "You

stay, anyway, and we'll have a nice play together before Charlie wakes up. Come over by the window, and I'll show you my dissected map. Papa brought it to me last night, and I can put it all together, myself. Come try if you can."

But Julia hung back still. "I don't like dissected maps. There's no fun poking over those little crooked bits of wood. I won't stay unless you'll play party."

"But I haven't anything to play party with!" Bessie exclaimed. "I had some sugar-plums, but they're all gone, and I haven't a thing now."

"Well, you must get something, or else I won't stay. You can get lots of things down stairs, I know, and your mother always has oranges in this closet besides. I mean to look if there are not some here now."

Julia opened the closet door as she spoke, and began to climb upon a chair, to search the upper shelves. Bessie watched her, knowing very well that she was doing a rude and impertinent thing, and that it was her duty to forbid it. But she was afraid to say a word; so Julia rummaged the closet to her heart's content, highly delighted at the opportunity. The first treasure that she dis-

covered was a great golden shaddock, which Bessie's father had brought home the night before, and Mrs. Henshaw had put out of the children's sight, because it was not yet ripe enough for them to eat. Bessie, as it happened, had not seen it at all, and she exclaimed, with astonishment, "O, what a big orange!" as Julia held it up triumphantly.

"It isn't an orange, it's a shaddock!" Julia cried, jumping down. "I've seen 'em before, and they're splendid with sugar! You run down stairs now, that's a good girl, and get a whole lot of sugar, and then we'll have an elegant party!"

"But I can't!" exclaimed Bessie, in dismay. "Mamma doesn't let me have sugar unless I ask for it; and besides, we can't have that orange at all. It isn't mine, Julia, and you must put it back in the closet; indeed you must."

"Indeed I shan't, then," Julia returned, coolly. "I'm going to cut it up for a party, and you're going to get some sugar to put over it. So run along, and make haste, and bring up a piece of cake, too; we can't have a party without cake."

"I can't do it!" Bessie repeated, in great distress. "O, please, Julia, don't ask me! Mamma would be so vexed when she found it out."

"But she needn't ever find it out," said Julia. "You are not such a goose as to tell her everything you do, I hope?"

"She'll miss the shaddock, and she'll be sure to ask me about it," pleaded Bessie again.

"And you can tell her you never saw it," answered Julia, boldly. "If she wasn't real mean she'd never make a fuss about such a little thing; and when people are mean, it's no harm to tell them a story."

This was a new argument to Bessie, and, not quite seeing through the logic, she had nothing to say. Julia went on still more boldly:—

"If you don't do what I want you to, I'll never speak to you again as long as I live; and I'll tell all the girls at school about it, so *they* won't speak to you, either. There, now! you can just take your choice."

Poor silly little Bessie! she listened to this awful threat, and trembled with fear of it. She did not think enough to see how ridiculous one half of it was—as if any sensible girl in school would think less of her for refusing to do something wrong! And as for the rest, if Julia only would keep to the letter of her threat, and never speak to Bessie again, why, so much the better for Bessie!

But no one was by to whisper this in the little girl's ear, and she was already corrupted by the evil communications, which, a little while ago, she had refused to believe in. It seemed better to disobey and deceive her mother than to displease this bad companion. So she made her choice.

She stole softly down stairs, feeling guilty and ashamed of herself, but still determined to obey Julia's orders. The dining-room door was open, and she slipped in without being seen, and hastily filled a tea-cup with powdered sugar from the sideboard. A silver basket full of cake stood beside the sugar-bowl, and she took two large pieces from that, crammed them into her pocket, and hurried off with her plunder before any one came in. The sound of her mother's voice in the parlor made her tremble as she crept by the door, but no one saw her after all, and she succeeded in reaching the nursery safely. There Julia received her with abundant praise and flattery, till the poor little dupe began to think she had done something clever and brave.

In her absence Julia had been to the closet again, and found a box of guava jelly, which she appropriated to her own use as coolly

as she had taken the shaddock. Bessie, of course, could not say anything against it now; and Julia began to set out "the party" with great satisfaction.

"Why didn't you think of a spoon?" she asked presently. "O, never mind! here's your mother's silver fruit-knife—that will do."

And the knife—a very nice one—was taken from Mrs. Henshaw's work-box, and plunged into the thick skin of the shaddock. The sticky guava jelly was served with the same thing—Julia getting a large mouthful herself before she offered any to her hostess.

Bessie, however, had no appetite for the dainties: every sound she heard filled her with terror, lest somebody should come up and discover what was going on. Julia was not in the least disturbed. She enjoyed the party extremely, and managed to eat Bessie's share, as well as her own, without any difficulty.

"I guess I'll go home now," she said, when the last crumb of cake had disappeared, and there was nothing left of the fruit but its thick bitter rind. "The ladies down stairs are getting ready to go—I heard them moving."

Bessie had heard the same thing, and she was

quite willing to let Julia go before her mother came up stairs. Julia herself, bold and impudent as she was, had no wish to meet Mrs. Henshaw after all this, and so her good by was said quickly. Bessie watched her as she bounded lightly down the steps, and disappeared in the curve of the stairway that led to the basement hall. She heard the lower door shut behind her, and the next moment there was a rustle of dresses, and Mrs. Henshaw and her visitors came out of the parlor. There were some last words to be said there, and it gave Julia time to get at a safe distance from the house, while Bessie stole back to the nursery, and tried to look as if nothing unusual had taken place.

It was not an easy thing to do, for this was her first actual experiment in the art of deceit, and it was hard to keep the terror that was in her heart from showing itself on her face. Little Charlie, who had been asleep in his crib in the curtained alcove, lifted up his curly head, with a pair of very wide-open blue eyes, as she came in; and she snatched him up with a great feeling of relief, thinking her mother would take less notice of her now that Charlie was here to claim her attention. But the relief was changed into

dismay by the first words which the little fellow spoke.

"I'm glad that bad dirl's all done," he said, in his broken, baby speech. "She's a naughty dirl, and I'll tell my mamma of her."

"Tell her what, Charlie? What do you mean?" Bessie exclaimed, growing pale with fright.

"How she toot mamma's bid orange, an' made you do det sudar," Charlie answered, promptly. "*I* saw her, an' I'm doin' to tell mamma. We won't let her tome here any more, will we, sister?"

"O, Charlie, don't!" It was all Bessie could say, for she felt as if she was going to faint, in this new and unexpected fear. She had not thought of the child while Julia was there, though now she remembered well what a habit he had of lying quiet in his crib for a long time after waking from his nap. He had been awake and seen the whole thing, and she felt only too surely that he would do just as he said, and "tell mamma all about it." He was too little to be coaxed or frightened into keeping the secret; he could not be made to understand, as she knew in her heart; yet she was so wild with terror that she began eagerly to beg him

not to tell, and promise him all sorts of pleasures if he would not say anything about Julia. She did not think, in her excitement, how loudly she was talking, or remember how near her mother was to her ; and just as poor little Charlie, frightened by her vehemence, and bewildered by the whole affair, had begun to cry, Mrs. Henshaw came into the room.

“Bessie ! what is the meaning of all this ?” she asked, severely ; and one frightened glance at her face told the poor child that any attempt at concealment or deception was out of the question now. She stammered some incoherent answer that could not be heard, broke down in the middle of it, and burst into tears. At that moment she realized that her mother’s favor and approval were of more consequence to her than Julia Sherman’s, and she wished then, at least, if not before, that she had made her choice from that stand-point.

She wished it still more, when, in answer to her mother’s close questioning, she had to tell the whole story : to confess how, in the first place, she had persuaded Julia to stay, when she knew it was wrong, and afterwards had lent herself so weakly to be the tool of Julia’s greed-

ness and trickery. The whole thing looked so contemptible when it was set out plainly before her! She "had gone through so much to get so little," as the saying is; for, after all, what pleasure had she felt in Julia's visit? Not a single minute of the time but had been tortured with anxiety, and fear, and self-reproach, all to end in the shame and distress she felt now, and the loss of her mother's confidence.

It does one good sometimes, however, to grow heartily ashamed of one's self. Bessie had felt so sure of her own "good manners" hitherto, that she had not thought it necessary to be on her guard against the danger of "evil communications." But she recognized her mother's wisdom now in contrast to her own foolishness; and henceforth was willing to be guided by that wisdom in the choice of her companions.

Julia Sherman had no more "parties" at Bessie's expense. In fact she had made up her mind that "it would not pay" to go there any more after this; so she devoted herself to some new pupils who had just arrived, and "turned the cold shoulder" to Bessie. For which Mrs. Henshaw felt sincerely obliged to her, and Bessie herself was not greatly grieved.

SPENCER'S CHERRIES.

“**I**F there is one kind of fruit that I like better than another,” said Spencer Lane to himself, “it’s cherries. Strawberries are very good till you get enough of ’em, but I never had as many cherries as I wanted in my life. I guess I would for once, though, if my father would give me leave to climb that tree!”

The boy leaned back in the garden-chair, and cast longing eyes into the thick, leafy branches above him, where scarlet clusters of fruit hung ripening in the sunlight far out of his reach. The tree looked, certainly, very tempting, with that beautiful bright color gleaming everywhere through the dark green leaves; and this warm June afternoon, when he was tired and heated with his long morning of play, the idea of the cool, juicy cherries was most attractive to Spencer’s fancy.

“I don’t see why papa need be so particular,” he went on, in a complaining tone, speaking his

thoughts aloud, as if some one were there to answer them.

"Anybody might see those cherries are ripe — red as they look ; and the idea of papa's insisting they are not to be touched till the Fourth of July ! It's ridiculous to have to wait a whole week for what I might as well have now. I've a great mind to go and ask mother if I can't climb up and see if they're ripe. Maybe *she* won't be so fussy."

He sprang up as this happy thought struck him, and ran into the house, to lose no time in carrying it out. Mrs. Lane was sitting in the parlor, in her afternoon dress of delicate summer muslin ; her white hands and shining hair made a striking contrast with Spencer's warm and tumbled, not to say *dirty*, appearance, as he rushed without ceremony into her presence.

"I say, mother," he began, eagerly, "mayn't I climb the cherry tree? Just to see if the cherries are ripe, you know. They're as red as fire up at the top. Can't I do it?"

"My son !" Mrs. Lane waved him from her with a look of displeasure. "How often have I told you never to come into this room unless you look like a gentleman ! What a condition your face and hands and clothes are in !"

"O, pshaw!" Spencer gave his shoulders an impatient jerk. "Can't a fellow ask you a question without being dressed up, I'd like to know?"

He hardly intended to be so very rude, or knew indeed that he was so, in his haste and eagerness, until his mother's surprised look recalled him to consciousness. But then it was too late.

"You can leave the room, Spencer," she said, quietly and gravely, "and do not come back until you are dressed as you should be, and can speak to me rather more respectfully."

"But *can't* I climb the cherry tree?" he persisted, in spite of her reproof.

"Certainly not. I am surprised at your asking me, when you know your father has forbidden you positively."

It was useless to say another word, of course; so he flung himself out of the parlor in a rage. He had fancied, very foolishly, that his mother might allow him to do what his father had forbidden; and he was so unreasonable as to be angry and disappointed because she had too much good sense to indulge him. He did not stop to think—I suppose children don't, as a general thing—that it would be wrong and unwise in her to set at naught his father's com-

mands. He only knew that he wished for the cherries very much, and the more he thought of them, the more aggrieved he felt himself in not being allowed to have them.

He sulked up stairs in his room till the dinner-bell rang, and would not have gone down then only that hunger, and the anticipation of green peas, proved too much for his dignity. If he had not been in such a bad humor, he would have cared no more for the cherries when so nice a dinner was spread before him ; for the green peas were there, with stuffed lamb, and delicious mealy potatoes ; and sliced pineapple and sponge-cake for dessert—things that he really liked better than cherries, if he had only chosen to think so. He swallowed his food in sullen silence, however, paying no attention to his mother's reproachful glance ; and, as soon as dinner was over, he put on his hat and went out upon the sidewalk, where he staid until his father called him in, and sent him to bed.

The next day was Sunday, —a beautiful, bright summer Sunday, — when the week-day noise was hushed in the streets, and the song of the birds rang out instead in sweet thanksgiving strains. Under Spencer's window there were roses climb-

ing over a trellis, their pink clusters sparkling with dewdrops, and breathing out delicious fragrance; along the garden-borders there were beds of purple pansies, and clumps of carnations, and lady-slippers, and phlox, gay with blossoms; while all over the fence ran morning-glory vines, that were wonderful to look at, they were so thickly hung with the blue, and crimson, and purple, and pink, and streaked and spotted bells.

But Spencer looked at none of them, beautiful as they all were. He only saw the cherry tree, whose scarlet clusters were redder than ever in the brilliant sunlight, and the sight recalled all the discontented, impatient feelings of the night before. He had gone to bed without repenting of them, so of course they were the first to visit him again in the morning.

Going to church did not do him much good that Sunday. All through the service he fidgeted in his seat, shuffled his feet about, and rustled the leaves of his prayer-book on purpose to annoy his parents, so completely had the evil spirit taken possession of him. And even when he chose to sit still, he did not listen to the sermon, but only kept thinking how unkind they were to deny him the pleasure he wished for.

It was not strange, when he gave himself up to such wicked thoughts, that another more wicked still should come to him at last. This was nothing less than to climb the cherry tree, in spite of being forbidden, and to do it that very evening after his father and mother had gone to church, so that there would be no danger of his being seen. You will wonder that he dared to think of such a thing on Sunday, and in church, of all times and places; but Satan is bold when he sees that we are willing to be tempted, and the holiest places are not safe from his evil whispers as long as our own hearts open to let them in.

Spencer did not consent immediately to this sinful plan; but, instead of driving it out as soon as it came into his mind, with shame and dread, he listened to it, and turned it over and over in his thoughts, and wondered if anybody would ever know, until the end of it was — what the end always is when we tamper with temptation — that he determined to climb the tree, and shut his eyes to the sin.

He complained of a headache after tea, as an excuse for not going to church, and, as no one thought of doubting his word, he was left at

home. Mrs. Lane brought him her vinaigrette, and made him lie down on the sofa, giving him a kiss as she went away, and telling him to go to sleep and forget the pain. Spencer would have been glad if she had not kissed him, knowing how little he deserved it. It made him so uncomfortable for a little while that he almost resolved to give up his evil intentions. But he found that was not easy to do now. He had yielded to Satan, and he was not strong enough to draw back.

He went out into the yard as it grew darker, and seated himself in the garden-chair under the cherry tree. Everything was still and quiet around him, no one stirring out of doors, and not even a servant to be seen at the windows. He knew there was no danger of discovery as far as they were concerned, for the housemaid was gone out, and the cook was more likely to be on the sidewalk in front of the house gossiping with some neighbor, than cooped up in the kitchen this warm evening. Still he thought he would be on the safe side, and not climb the tree till it was quite dark. So he sat out in the garden-chair, with the dew falling on his uncovered head, until the soft summer twilight deep-

ened into night, and the shadow of the cherry tree was all black around him. Then he climbed upon the wood-shed, over which its branches hung, and from which it was easy to get firm footing on the lower limbs.

He was half frightened when he found himself fairly in the tree, and stood still and breathless amongst the leaves for two or three minutes, dreading lest any one should see or hear him. But there was no sound at all except the sleepy twitter of a bird half awake on her nest. So he plucked up courage, and began to go higher, where the ripe cherries were. It was so dusky that he could tell nothing by the color, and the very first ones that he put in his mouth were decidedly sour — so little to his taste that he was just on the point of spitting them out again, when he remembered, in time to save himself, that they would be a witness against him if they were seen on the ground.

“I shall have to feel for the soft ones,” he thought, as this came into his mind. “It’s no fun eating such sour things as that first lot. My teeth are all on edge now. It’s lucky I don’t mind swallowing the stones, though. I always did think it was a bother to have to spit ’em out.”

“Feeling for the soft ones” proved rather a troublesome task, and Spencer got many a sour, green thing in his mouth, which he was forced to swallow with the best grace he could. He did find some that were ripe and sweet, however, and as in his eagerness he grew bolder, and ventured up into the topmost branches, quite a number came in his way that he declared were delicious. I doubt if he enjoyed them as much as he tried to make himself believe; but at any rate he devoured a great many, determined “to have enough for once,” and did not come down until he was really unable to eat any more.

The clock was striking nine as he crept stealthily into the house, and he hurried up stairs to bed, knowing that his parents would soon be at home. It was impossible to go to sleep, however, and he was still wide awake when they arrived. Mrs. Lane, missing him in the parlor, came up stairs directly to look for him, and he found it terribly hard to seem to be asleep as she hung over his bed, the gaslight from the hall shining full in his face. She did not stay long, fortunately, and when she was fairly gone he tried to go to sleep in earnest. But it was a long while before he could do so. He tossed

about the bed hour after hour, and when every one else was wrapt in quiet slumber, his guilty conscience still would not let him rest. In vain he closed his eyes and tried not to think of anything. He could not help going over the whole affair in his mind, trying to remember whether he had been *very* careful not to drop a single cherry, or get a stain upon his clothes, and wondering whether, after all, anybody *could* have seen him.

He dropped to sleep at last from absolute weariness, and forgot it all for a few hours ; but towards morning he was awakened again by a very uncomfortable sensation. He could not tell what the matter was at first, but he found out soon when there came a spasm of pain so violent that it almost took his breath away. The exposure to night air, and the unwholesome food together, had prepared a punishment for him which he had not thought of in all his plans ; and as he lay now, pale and quivering with mingled anguish and fear, he wished with all his heart that he had never done so foolish and wicked a thing.

He bore his suffering in silence for a while, hoping that by keeping quite still it might pass

over; but instead, the pain grew worse and worse, until he could endure it no longer without help. A wild fear came over him that he was going to die, and he screamed out so loudly that his mother was roused from her sleep, and came hurrying to his bedside to see what was the matter. She saw at once that he was seriously ill, though she did not for a moment suspect the cause. She remembered the headache that he had complained of in the evening, and supposed that his disorder had really begun then. Full of pity and tenderness for him, she hastened to apply one remedy and another, until at length the sharp pangs were relieved, and Spencer, weary and exhausted, once more fell asleep.

It was late in the morning when he awoke again. His head was aching, his mouth parched, his hands dry with feverish heat. Mrs. Lane was sitting by the bed, watching him anxiously, and she gave him such a loving, tender smile as his eyes unclosed, that a sudden pang of remorse and shame shot through his heart.

"The doctor has been to see you, my son, while you were asleep," she said, gently, "and he has left some medicine for you. Do you feel any better now?"

“Not much.”

Spencer raised himself up, and swallowed the medicine which his mother held out to him, but he did not feel like saying any more. He was glad he had been asleep when the doctor came, for he dreaded the question that was sure to be asked — *had he eaten anything that disagreed with him?* It was put off till another day, at least, and by to-morrow, perhaps, he would be over it.

So he turned his face to the wall, and lay there silently hour after hour, feeling most miserable in mind and body. His head was throbbing with a burning pain, but he could not bear to feel his mother's cool, soft hand upon it; and every tender, pitying word she spoke did but add to his unhappiness. For he knew that he deserved no kindness; that his own sin had caused all his suffering; and that he had no right to any sympathy or care. He longed secretly to throw his arms around her neck, and tell her the whole truth, but his courage failed as often as he tried to speak; the words clung to his lips. And the day wore slowly away as he lay there, still with his sin unconfessed.

Towards evening a lady called to see his

mother. It was a neighbor who visited them intimately. And when she heard that Spencer was sick, and Mrs. Lane up stairs, she ran up without ceremony into Mrs. Lane's own room. Spencer's bed was in the hall-room adjoining, and the door was open between, so that he heard all the conversation. At first it amused him, and diverted his thoughts, for the lady was gay and talkative. But he grew uncomfortable, by and by, for she had taken a seat by the window, and began to notice the cherry-tree.

"How full of fruit it is, and how red the cherries begin to look!" she exclaimed. "It's a pity they're so unwholesome when they are so pretty. By the way," — and she turned suddenly to Spencer, — "I wonder if that isn't the matter with you, young gentleman? I saw somebody about your size climbing up the tree last night."

"No, you didn't," answered Spencer, quickly. But his face grew red with shame as he spoke, and the next minute white with fear.

"O, it was a mistake, then," the lady replied, hastily, seeing that she had made mischief. "It must have been some one else that I saw. There are so many boys in the neighborhood, you know,

and they're always ready to rob a fruit tree, if they get a good opportunity," she added, turning to Mrs. Lane.

"I know it," said Mrs. Lane, quietly. "I do not suppose we shall be exempt from the general rule."

And there was nothing more said about it. The lady took her leave soon after, and Mrs. Lane went to the door with her; but she came back instantly, and Spencer saw, from one hurried, ashamed glance, that her face was as pale as death as she stood beside his bed.

"Is it possible, Spencer," she exclaimed, in a low voice, "that what Mrs. Ellis said of you is true? Tell me at once."

Her tone was as gentle as ever, but how full of sorrow, of reproach, of pain! Spencer could not bear it any longer; it was the last drop in his cup of misery; and bursting into bitter tears, he threw himself in her arms and told her all.

"O, mother, mother, only forgive me! I never will disobey you any more!" he sobbed, in passionate regret; and his mother saw that his repentance was heartfelt.

It was a comfort to feel this, and to believe that his eager promises were sincere. So she

forgave him; and kneeling by his sick bed, prayed that God would forgive him, too, and help him in future to resist temptation. Spencer never forgot that prayer: the broken, sorrowful voice that pleaded for him so earnestly; the tears that stood upon his mother's pale cheek when she rose up; the tender and yearning look which she gave him when she left the room, lingered in his heart forever after.

Many days of pain and weakness followed this, and when, at last, the boy was able to creep out of bed, and sit by the window a little while, all the red clusters had vanished from the cherry tree, and only the green leaves were fluttering in the summer breeze. But Spencer did not regret them: he only thought of the sin and suffering he had fallen into, and prayed in his heart that he might profit by the lesson he had learned so hardly.

ROSY LEE'S THANKSGIVING.

“GOOD morning, Rosy. How’s grandmother to-day?”

“O, Miss Miller, how do you do? Good morning!” And Rosy Lee stopped in her brisk walk, and held her hand out, with a bright look, to the lady who had greeted her at the street-crossing.

“Very well,” answered Miss Miller, pleasantly, “and I see *you* are, by your red cheeks. Is your grandmother’s rheumatism better?”

“Not much,” said Rosy. “She hardly gets any sleep at night, her arms ache so. I do wish she *could* get better.”

“So do I,” said Miss Miller, kindly; “and, by the way, Rosy, I’ve got a prescription that might be good for her. Mrs. Clinton told me of it yesterday. She has had a great deal of rheumatism, and nothing ever did her so much good, she says.”

“O, please tell me what it is!” Rosy exclaimed, eagerly.

“You must get a quart of port wine, a pound of raisins, and a pound of loaf sugar,” said Miss Miller. “Mix them together, and take a wine-glass full three times a day. It’s not bad to take, you see, and Mrs. Clinton says it’s a good remedy. Your grandmother had better try it; it won’t hurt her, at any rate.”

“I’ll tell her about it,” answered Rosy; “and I’m very much obliged to you, Miss Miller.”

But some way her face did not look so bright, and her voice was not so cheery as it had been a minute before; and when Miss Miller said good by, and turned down the side street, Rosy broke out with a half petulant, half sorrowful exclamation:—

“Port wine, and raisins, and loaf sugar, indeed! Where does she think we’re going to get them, when we can hardly afford a cup of tea for grandma to drink? O dear! if I only knew how to earn a little more money! But I work as hard as ever I can now.”

The bundle of finished sewing that she was carrying home proved that she was not idle, indeed; and anybody who had peeped into old Mrs. Lee’s tidy little lodging, at any hour of the day, would have found out the same truth; for

Rosy was busy from morning till night. She was cook, and laundress, and housemaid, and everything else in their little establishment, for now that grandmother's rheumatism had fallen into her arms and hands, she could do little or nothing.

Then, in addition to the housework, Rosy had to take in sewing to make their small income sufficient for actual necessities of food and clothing. It had not been so hard when her grandmother was well: she sewed nicely, and knit beautiful socks and mittens, which found a ready sale; and Rosy had plenty of customers for *her* neat work. So that, with the little annuity which her father had left for them when he died, they had managed to be quite comfortable, in an economical way.

But things were different now, and it was very hard to get along at all. So much more work fell upon the child in consequence of her grandmother's helplessness, that of necessity she earned less with her needle; and in spite of her cheerful disposition, and her natural habit of looking on the bright side of things, her heart grew so heavy sometimes that she felt ready to despair.

"I wonder what's the reason," she thought,

as she hurried down the street, "that some people have so much more than they need in this world, and some others so much less. Just look at Mrs. Clinton now. Such a beautiful house she has, and everything about her so fine and elegant; and I heard Miss Miller say she was so rich she didn't know how to spend her money. And then think of grandma — poor, dear grandma! — how she has to suffer all this pain, because we can't afford to get the medicine that would cure her! I suppose it must be all right, but it does seem very strange!"

Older and wiser people than Rosy have puzzled over the same problem many a time, and always will, I suppose, till the world comes to an end. But the only thing to do, for great or small, is to adopt the child's faith, and believe that "it is all right," *because it is God's will*, — no matter how strange and hard it may seem sometimes.

She had reached Mrs. Clinton's house by this time, for it was to her that the work belonged; and the servant who was shaking the mats at the door told her to "go right up stairs; Mrs. Clinton was waiting for her."

So Rosy mounted the elegant staircase, and

found her way to the large and luxurious chamber where the old lady sat for the greater part of the day. She was seated in a great easy-chair, covered with velvet, with embroidered cushions at her feet, and all manner of beautiful and costly things around her. An inlaid table at her right hand held a silver basket full of superb hot-house grapes; a Bohemian vase in the window was filled with the loveliest flowers; and on a marble slab, supported by a mermaid in bronze, stood a salt-water aquarium, stocked with the choicest of sea-plants and fishes.

This last had been an unfailing wonder and delight to Rosy, who had more than once asked permission to watch the curious flesh-colored anemones, and the brilliant fish gliding in and out of the pretty rock-work caves. But she did not give it a single glance this morning, and stood so silent and sad while Mrs. Clinton examined her work, that the old lady took notice of it, and asked in her sharp way, peering over her spectacles, —

“What ails you, to-day, that you look so glum? Have *you* come to trouble, too, like all the rest of the world?”

“I don’t know, ma’am,” Rosy answered, shy-

ly. She did not care about telling her poor little home sorrows to this grand old lady.

“Don’t know? You’re better off than most people, then,” said Mrs. Clinton. “If you’d seen the trouble *I* have you’d be apt to know.”

Rosy wondered what sort of trouble she could have, for, like a good many other people, she had the notion that being rich was a sort of security against trial. She did not venture to say anything, however, and Mrs. Clinton asked her no more questions. She took out her purse to pay for the work, and then, seeing Rosy’s eyes fixed on the handsome tidy at the back of her chair, she asked if she knew how to crochet.

Rosy did, and a bright thought sprung up. Perhaps Mrs. Clinton would give her some crochet work to do, and it was paid for so much better than sewing, that she might possibly get the medicine for her grandmother after all. She was not mistaken, for Mrs. Clinton unfastened the tidy from her chair, and handed it to Rosy, saying, —

“If you think you can copy this pattern, you may take it home with you, and make me another just like it. And I want a set of table-mats besides. If you do them nicely, I’ll pay you a good price for them.”

Rosy was certain of that, for Mrs. Clinton always paid her generously, and she accepted the commission with a happy heart. She felt far more bright and hopeful as she ran briskly homeward than she would have believed possible half an hour before; and she worked with such a hearty good will all day long, that the tidy was one third done before night came. It was finished before she went to bed the next night, and the table-mats were begun on the third day. This was much slower work than the tidy, in spite of the elaborate pattern, for it had all to be done in the closest and thickest stitch, so that it took a good while to complete a single mat. But she worked diligently and cheerfully, resting herself, when she was tired, with the pleasant hope, that grew stronger every day, of being able to relieve her dear grandmother from pain.

So three weeks went by, and Thanksgiving Day was close at hand. Rosy had no bright visions of a grand company dinner, with turkey and plum pudding, and any quantity of nuts and apples, and music and "blindman's buff" in the evening. She had never had much experience of such things; but still Thanksgiving Day had always been made pleasant to her by a little

treat of some kind. And she looked forward to it now more eagerly than ever before, for she felt almost sure that her crochet work would bring her money enough to accomplish the purpose she longed for, and leave something over besides for a nice Thanksgiving dinner. There were eighteen mats besides the tidy; and as Rosy added the last one to the neat-looking pile, the day before the twenty-ninth of November, she felt exceedingly proud and happy.

“I shall get five dollars, I know; maybe more,” she thought, as she walked through the street with her precious bundle in her arms; “and won’t grandma be surprised when she sees what I shall bring her! I’ll get it this very day, as soon as ever Mrs. Clinton gives me the money.”

On she went with a bounding step, singing little scraps of songs under her breath as she danced along, for she felt so happy that she could not walk soberly. Mrs. Clinton’s house was soon reached at this rate, and her eager hand gave the bell a vigorous pull that brought a servant in haste to the door.

“O, it’s you, then?” for they all knew Rosy’s face well enough. “Why didn’t you pull off

the bell-handle, I wonder? What are you come for now?"

"To see Mrs. Clinton, of course; I've brought some work home," said Rosy, cheerfully, for she did not care for the servant girl's saucy ways.

"Well, you can't see her," was the answer. "She won't see nobody to-day, if it was the king's wife."

"O, but I must!" Rosy exclaimed. "Indeed, I must. It's some work that she's very particular about, and she wants to see me herself."

"I can't help that," persisted the girl. "She's got a headache, and she's given orders that nobody is to disturb her. I ain't a-goin' to disobey 'em for you, I can tell you. So you'll just have to call again."

"O, dear!" Rosy was ready to cry in her distress and disappointment. "I *do* want to see her so badly! Won't you please just tell her I'm here, and see if she won't let me come up?"

"No, indeed, I shan't!" was the cross reply. "I wouldn't dare to, and it's all nonsense, anyhow. You can come again easy enough. What's to hinder you? So be off, and don't keep me bothering here any longer."

She made a motion as if to shut the door in

her face. Rosy retreated, too mortified and angry to say another word, and ran down the steps with a sob choking in her throat. She had hardly got to the bottom before the door opened again, and the pert voice called after her, —

“I say! don’t you come again to-morrow; for we’re going to have a dinner party, and Mrs. Clinton won’t want to be bothered with *you*. You hear, don’t you?”

And then the door slammed to, and poor Rosy was left alone in the street, to get over her disappointment the best way she could. It seemed too much to be borne, indeed; and hot tears blinded her eyes, and bitter thoughts swelled in her heart, as she recalled the unjust and insolent way in which she had been treated.

“It’s just because *I’m poor*, and poor people are always treated like dogs;” she said, passionately, never caring that she spoke aloud, and anybody might hear her. “*She* mustn’t be disturbed when she has a headache; but it don’t make any difference how many headaches I have over her work. And as long as *her* Thanksgiving isn’t bothered, it’s no matter whether *I* have any or not! I’ve a great mind to throw

her mats in the street, and never go near the house again."

She was hurrying on, too full of her grief and anger to see anybody; and so it happened that, in turning a corner, she ran against her friend Miss Miller, and had almost thrown her down, before she recognized her. She muttered, hastily, —

"I beg your pardon, Miss Miller; I didn't mean to be so rude;" and was rushing on again, but the lady held her back.

"What in the world is the matter with you, Rosy?" in wonder at the child's red and tear-stained face. "I don't believe I ever saw you crying before. What has happened to you, my dear?"

The kind voice, the ready sympathy, were too much to resist in Rosy's excited condition. She broke out passionately with the whole story, and told Miss Miller, with plenty of sobs and tears between, all about her three weeks' work, and what she had intended to do with the money, and how all her plans had been upset by Mrs. Clinton's refusal to see her.

Miss Miller listened with the deepest interest. She had never known before that her favorite

pupil in her Sunday school class was so poor; for Rosy and her grandmother were far too proud to speak of their wants. She never would have known, except for this accident and Rosy's excitement, which made her forget pride and everything else but the comfort of telling her trouble to so kind a listener. Now that she did know, however, it did not take her long to decide what to do. She was not one to lose an opportunity of doing good.

"Give me your bundle, Rosy," she said, finally, when the story was ended. "I'll see if I can't deliver it for you, in spite of Mrs. Clinton's saucy maid; and you go home, dear, and make yourself easy. This matter will be set right."

"O, Miss Miller!" Rosy could hardly speak for her tears. "You are too kind. I've no right to give you such trouble."

"It will not be a trouble," said her teacher; "and if it were, isn't it my duty to help you bear your burdens, *so fulfilling the law of Christ?*"

So Rosy went on her way comforted, with a heart so full of thankful love that there was no longer room for the bitter and angry feelings which had grown out of her disappointment. She was not sorry to have them crowded out,

you may be sure, for they were neither welcome nor accustomed guests in her loving and patient little soul. The sweetest natures in the world, however, have their bitter moments and evil impulses: it would be well if we could all shake them off as easily as Rosy did.

As for Miss Miller, she went straight to Mrs. Clinton's house as soon as she had parted from her little pupil. The pert housemaid did not venture to refuse admittance to *her*, or to take her message up to the mistress; and Miss Miller was soon in Mrs. Clinton's room, telling Rosy's little story. What the result of her interference was, we shall find out best by looking into Mrs. Lee's snug sitting-room about dusk of the same day.

The fire was burning cheerily in their little cooking-stove, and the tea-kettle singing in tune. Grandmother was dozing in her arm-chair, forgetting her rheumatism for the time; and Rosy stood by the window, looking out into the lighted street, where all the shops were gay with Thanksgiving decorations. All at once there came a sounding rap, that made Mrs. Lee start in her sleep, and sent Rosy, with a beating heart, to open the door. She had been expecting *some-*

thing all the afternoon; but she was hardly prepared for the sight of Mrs. Clinton's magnificent coachman, with a letter in one hand, and a big basket in the other.

"Your name is Rosy Lee?" he asked, condescendingly. "This basket is for you, then."

And setting it inside the door, he handed Rosy the letter, and was gone before she could find voice enough to speak to him. She lighted a lamp in eager haste, and tore open the letter, grandmother looking on, with curious interest. Two notes were enclosed, and the first one was from Miss Miller:—

"MY DEAR ROSY: I think you will have a happy Thanksgiving in spite of your disappointment this morning. Mrs. Clinton's note will make amends for Nora's rudeness, and I know you will enjoy the basket of good things she has sent for your holiday. You must not think of refusing the little present which I enclose for you. It is sent with my best love and kindest wishes, and I am always your affectionate teacher,

MAGDALEN MILLER."

The "little present" was a five-dollar bill — a small fortune to Rosy. Mrs. Clinton's note was this: —

"DEAR LITTLE ROSY: Miss Miller has just made me very angry, by telling me how badly Nora behaved to you this morning. I had her up stairs, and gave her such a lecture that she will know how to behave herself in future, I think.

"Your work is beautifully done, and I shall have more of the same sort for you to do. I send you six dollars to pay for it, and a basket of trifles for your grandmother. Give her my regards, and tell her to try my remedy for rheumatism. I am quite sure it will do her good. I wish you a happy Thanksgiving, and am your sincere friend,

H. B. CLINTON."

Rosy could hardly believe her own eyes, as she read these kind words from the stately old lady, who had always seemed to her like a different order of being from the common class of mortals. "Dear little Rosy!" Her cheeks flushed with pride and pleasure as she looked at the

words ; and old Mrs. Lee was equally delighted, though *she* thought Rosy was quite good enough to be called “ dear ” by any lady in the land.

The “ basket of trifles ” was the next thing to be examined ; and very nice trifles they proved to be. A fine, fat turkey was one of them ; two large bottles of old port, another ; and after that came a variety of “ trifles ” in the shape of loaf sugar, raisins, walnuts, Spitzenburg apples, and a mince pie, under whose flaky crust many a nice plum was hidden. Mrs. Clinton had packed the basket with her own hands, and it was the very pleasantest part of all her fine Thanksgiving preparations. She quite forgot that she had a headache, or was going to have a dinner party to-morrow, in her anticipation of little Rosy’s delight.

As for *that*, you will have to imagine it ; for I never could describe all the half-laughing, half-tearful, altogether happy things she said and did ; nor what a fuss and preparation was made over the dinner next day, when two of Mrs. Lee’s old friends were invited to it, and one of Rosy’s class mates in Sunday school — an orphan girl, who had but scanty Thanksgiving at her own home, and so enjoyed Rosy’s all the more.

One thing, however, I must tell you: that Mrs. Clinton's receipt really proved a great relief, and before the two bottles of wine were used up, grandmother's rheumatism was so much better that she could do her share of work again; and they got on very comfortably all through the winter. And another thing I must tell you: that Rosy learned a lesson of trust in God's loving care and kindness from that Thanksgiving Day, which made her better and happier all the rest of her life.

BLANCHE'S LESSON.

A LITTLE girl and a lady sat together in a pretty room one pleasant summer morning. It was called "the school-room," and there was, to be sure, a desk in it, covered with green cloth, and strewn about with papers and pens; also a table, upon which lay two or three lesson-books—an arithmetic, a "speller and definer," and a little volume of French phrases.

But the room, for all this, was very different from most school-rooms. It had a cool, straw matting on the floor; delicate white curtains inside the windows, and honeysuckle vines outside; easy chairs and sofas all around; pictures on the walls, and flowers on the mantel. The teacher, too, was no stern old pedagogue, or sharp-faced schoolmistress, such as one sees often enough. She was just as pretty as the room, with a bright face and a sweet voice that were enough in themselves to make fractions and French verbs easy.

After all this, it is to be supposed, of course, that the little girl was a great deal happier than ordinary school-girls; that she was learning her lessons with the greatest diligence and delight; and that her governess had never to speak a word of reproof to her! On the contrary, there was quite a different state of things in the pretty school-room that sunny summer morning.

"Blanche," said Miss Loxley, in a very decided tone, "I am waiting to hear your lesson in definitions."

"I don't know my lesson in definitions," very sullenly from Blanche.

"You never will, if you sit all the morning pinching the leaves of your book, and tearing bits of paper off the edges, and never once looking at your lesson. How do you expect to learn it?"

"I don't want to learn it," pouted Blanche.

"So I see," returned Miss Loxley, calmly. "We are often obliged, however, to do things that we don't want to do; and this lesson of yours, my dear, is a case in point. You will please to bring your book, and sit beside me, and study aloud until you can recite all those definitions correctly. I do not intend to excuse you again."

‘She pointed with an air of authority to a little chair beside her, and looked at Blanche with a steady, quiet glance that showed she meant to be obeyed. But Blanche was a wilful little girl, who had been allowed to have her own way the greater part of her life; and she had no idea of submitting to this new governess, who ordered her to do this thing and that, as no other governess had ever ventured to do before. No, indeed! So, instead of obeying, she kept her seat resolutely, and neither spoke nor stirred, but set her lips together with a defiant expression that Miss Loxley understood at once to mean a declaration of rebellion.

She was not alarmed by it, although she foresaw the struggle that must ensue. Her spirit was quite as determined as her little pupil’s, and she knew that if she did not enforce her authority now she would never be able to do it afterwards. So she said, in the same, quiet tone, —

“I think you heard me give you an order, Blanche. Now I repeat it. Come and sit down in this chair!”

No answer from Blanche. Only the lips more tightly compressed, and the feet firmly planted upon the floor, as she obstinately kept her seat.

"You wish me to *compel* you, perhaps?" asked Miss Loxley, calmly.

"You *can't*!" answered the child, defiantly.

"Don't be too sure of that," with a little flash in the bright blue eye. "I wouldn't advise you to put it to the proof. Once more — for the last time — I command you to come and take your seat in this chair!"

She laid her hand upon it, and her eyes met Blanche's with such a "dangerous" look in them that the little stubborn spirit quailed at last. She rose with a jerk, marched across the room, and flung herself into the seat pointed out. But the book she kept shut in her hands, and would neither open it, nor study aloud a single word of the lesson. She was not afraid of punishment, for she had never been punished in her life; and although she had changed her seat because she knew Miss Loxley was stronger than she, and could compel her to do so, she also knew that Miss Loxley could not compel her to speak aloud if she did not choose to; and therefore she obstinately chose *not* to.

It was a difficult and disagreeable case to manage, but the governess was not daunted. She did not waste words in trying to make her pupil speak; she only said, —

“You can sit idle as long as you please, Blanche; I shall not interfere with you. But remember that I do not allow you to leave this room until you have learned your lesson, and recited it properly.”

Then she turned away to the green-covered desk, and began to write. Blanche sat in sullen anger, and watched her, with her heart full of indignant rebellion against an authority more stringent than any she had ever felt before.

“What right has she to treat me so? Nobody else ever made me learn lessons when I didn’t want to, and I won’t learn it now! I won’t stay in this room all day, either, and I’ll tell my grandma just as soon as ever she comes home. So I will!”

And poor little naughty Blanche shed tears of impotent rage as the passionate thoughts surged up in her mind. “She would not give up—no, that she *never* would!” she said to herself over and over again. But she felt through it all that there was very little use in her resistance; for her grandmother, who had humored and petted her far too much for her own good, was away on a journey, and Miss Loxley was mistress of the house during her absence.

Not a soul was there to interfere in her behalf; and she was entirely in her teacher's power. So it was a very vain and foolish resistance, and she knew it. Yet she persevered in it, although it was weary work, sitting idle and miserable in the little chair, while Miss Loxley's busy pen travelled over the paper, and her quick eye prevented the little rebel from moving a step away.

It would have been easier to study the lesson than to sit in this dreary silence and idleness; but she was too proud to own that, even to herself; too wilfully stubborn to do the only thing that could bring her any relief.

So the hours dragged by till the sun was high up in the deep-blue sky, and the pretty clock on the mantel-shelf chimed out twelve silvery notes for noon. This was the usual signal for her release. There were no more lessons after twelve, and she was free to amuse herself as she liked on ordinary days. But to-day the case was different. Warm, and tired, and wretched as she felt, she was still determined not to yield. Miss Loxley understood it at a glance, when she folded her letters, and rose from the desk.

"Very well," she said. "You choose to spend the day in the school-room, I see. But,

for my part, I am tired of looking at such a silly and naughty little girl. So I shall leave you to enjoy your own company all alone. I will send your luncheon to you here ; and when you have made up your mind to learn your lesson, you can ring the bell, and I will come and hear you say it."

With this she walked out of the room, and, lest Blanche in her absence should choose to follow her example, she coolly locked the door on the outside.

The sound of the key in the lock, that told the little girl she was a prisoner indeed, changed Blanche's sullen anger into a frenzy of rage. She stamped her feet, she tossed the books to and fro, she kicked the chairs about, she cried and screamed. It was all to no purpose, for nobody came to see what was the matter. The servants were accustomed to her tantrums, and not sorry to see that the new governess meant to have the upper hand of her.

"Time somebody made her mind," said the housekeeper. "Salt won't save her if she's let alone much longer."

So she only smiled grimly as she heard the passionate shrieks and stamps that came from the

school-room, and went to prepare the luncheon that Miss Loxley had ordered to be sent up.

"Don't allow her to come out, if you please, Mrs. Quince," Miss Loxley had said. "I have told her to stay until she learns her lesson, and I intend to make her do it."

"And I'm very glad you do," Mrs. Quince responded, heartily. "She'll not get out by me, I promise you."

So she carried up the luncheon-tray herself. Blanche flew to the door as soon as it was opened, and tried to rush past the housekeeper. But Mrs. Quince was too quick and too strong for her.

"No, indeed, miss. You'll get out fast enough if you try the right way. But you don't run over me—not yet."

She set down the tray, went out, and locked the door again, quite indifferent to the torrent of angry words that Blanche poured out in her disappointment. She had counted upon making her escape in this way, and she was more furious than ever at being balked. For it was her only chance: the window was far too high for her to climb out into the garden, and there was not even a door into another room. There was

nothing to do but kick and scream, and call her teacher all the ugly names she could think of; and this Blanche did till she was tired out, and then she lay on the floor and sobbed, in perfect misery and exhaustion. Poor little soul! the one way of escape that was so easy and simple she obstinately *would* not make use of.

A sweet little voice came to her ear by and by, as she lay in a careless heap close by the door.

"Blanchie!" it said, "are you there, Blanchie?"

And she knew that it was her little sister Alice who was calling her. She sprang to her feet with a sudden hope.

"Alice will open the door for me; she doesn't know," she thought; and she answered hastily in a loud, eager whisper, —

"Yes, Alice, I'm here. Open the door for me, and I'll come out and play with you."

"I can't open the door!" cried the child. "I'm too little to reach up! Why don't you open it yourself, Blanchie?"

"Because I can't," whispered Blanche, in answer. "It's locked outside."

"O! who locked you in?" exclaimed little

Alice, in a tone of dismay. "Was it Miss Loxley?"

"Never mind," said Blanche, hastily, "that's no matter. I want you to unlock it, Ally, and if you'll listen a minute, I'll tell you how. Just run into grandina's room, and get one of her hassocks — they're not heavy to lift — and bring it here to stand on. Then you can turn the key in the lock — it turns ever so easy — and I can get out. Run along, Ally, quick, that's a good girl! I'll take you out in the woods, and find huckleberries for you, and all sorts of things, if you'll make haste, and not let anybody see you."

"Will you?" little Alice answered, innocently. "Well, I'll make haste. I'll be back in a minute."

And she tripped away, pleased to be made useful, and quite unconscious that she was doing anything wrong. She was a mere baby, only four years old, and, of course, could know no better. Blanche knew very well that she was making her little sister do wrong, but she cared nothing for that so long as she accomplished her purpose.

In a minute or two the child came back, tugging the hassock through the hall; and climbing

upon it, she was able, after a little fumbling and working with the key, to get it turned in the lock. Another moment and the door stood open, and Blanche was no longer a prisoner.

It had all been done quietly and quickly, and nobody had seen or heard them. Blanche carried the hassock back to her grandmother's room, and locked the door of the school-room as it had been before. Then the two children stole softly down stairs, past the door of the parlor where Miss Loxley sat, all unconscious of what was going on, and out upon the piazza, where they found their round hats lying upon a bench.

Blanche put on her own, and tied Alice's under her chin, the little thing standing still and silent, and not even venturing to whisper, because she was told not to. Nobody was in sight at any door or window, and the runaway, holding her sister's little hand tightly in her own, darted across the lawn, and made her way safely down to the barn-yard. A lane led from that to the woods, which were very near the house, and once in that lane Blanche knew she was safe from discovery. The thick foliage of the willows hid her from view, and the ducks and chickens in the barn-yard would tell no tales of her.

So, at last, they were fairly in the woods, roaming at large under the shady old pine trees, and far enough out of the reach of Miss Loxley and her tiresome lessons. Blanche laughed, and shouted, and tossed her hat in the air in the triumph of her freedom. She snatched little Alice up, and swung her round and round, until they were both so dizzy that they dropped down in a heap upon the dry leaves. Then she kissed the child a dozen times, and declared that she was the dearest little darling in the world, and she loved her, O, more than tongue could tell ! But as for that ugly, old, cross, horrid Miss Loxley, why, she was just hateful, and Blanche never meant to like her any more, and neither must Alice ; they must coax grandmamma to send her away soon as ever she came home.

“ But I don't want her to be sent away,” said little Alice, innocently. “ She holds me on her lap, and tells me about Chin-Chopper and Polly Flinders. She isn't ugly, either. She has pretty blue eyes and curly hair, and I don't think she's horrid at all.”

“ But you *must* think so when I tell you,” said Blanche. “ Don't you know I'm the oldest ? She's horrid and ugly, because she's so cross to

me; and you mustn't like people that treat sister badly, Alice."

"What did she do?" asked Alice, doubting still.

"Do? Why, she locked me up in that nasty school-room, and was going to keep me there all day, and all night, and all the time, just for nothing! And only think, all she sent me for my lunch was bread and milk! Not a bit of cake, or raspberries, or honey, or anything! I wonder what grandma will say when I tell her *that?*"

Alice looked rather dismayed at this catalogue of Miss Loxley's offences, but she ventured another question:—

"Weren't you naughty at all?"

"No, I wasn't. But *you* are naughty to ask such questions; and I won't love you if you're not angry with her for treating me so badly."

"Well, I'll be angry," Alice said, hastily, getting frightened at her sister's scolding. "I won't love her any more. But you promised to find me some huckleberries."

"Jump up, then, and we'll go hunt for them," said Blanche. And she scrambled with the child down among the wild bushes and under-

growth in search of berries. But there were none to be found that were fit to eat. Plenty of green ones on the bushes, but all that were black and ripe had been picked off. Alice looked rather downcast at the disappointment, but Blanche said, —

“Never mind, I’ll give you a swing in the grape-vines. I know how to make a beautiful swing.”

There were wild grape-vines in great abundance in these woods. Their stout tendrils swung from one tree-trunk to another, and clambered up into the branches, covering the sober leafage of the pines with a beautiful new growth. In the autumn, clusters of grapes hung thick among them; and Blanche had climbed after these, getting many a slip and tumble, and many an ugly rent in her frocks, until she knew the grape-vines all by heart.

But she was strong and fearless; she had played in the woods ever since she could remember, and did not mind the falls and scrambles. If she climbed into the vines, and fell backwards, she could pick herself up none the worse. If she made “a beautiful swing,” as she called it, and it broke down, carrying her

with it, — as was generally the case, — she managed to scramble out again, not much hurt. She did not doubt but little Alice could do the same ; and so she proceeded to make her swing.

She had found what she considered a good vine for the purpose, and drawn down a long, straggling tendril from the network of stems interlaced overhead. It was in just the right curve for a swing, and the ends seemed to be securely fastened up in the tree. So she lifted Alice into the loop, — it was far above the ground, — and, bidding her “hold on tight,” she gave her a push that sent her swinging out beyond the tree.

The child swung backwards, breathless with delight, and Blanche gave her another push, and another, throwing her farther and farther out into the air. Something snapped and cracked overhead, presently. Blanche shouted, —

“Hold on, Alice !”

And sprang towards the swing to stop it. Perhaps it was the sudden outcry that frightened the child ; perhaps she had grown giddy with the unaccustomed motion ; there was no telling exactly how it happened ; but the slender little fingers grew suddenly powerless, the rough vine

slipped away from their grasp, and her head began to swim with a dizzy sickness. She threw her arms out wildly, and fell, face downward, in a helpless heap, to the ground.

Blanche fled to her with a scream of affright. It was a worse fall than ever *she* had had, and her sudden terror was redoubled when she discovered the condition that Alice was in. She lay just as she had fallen, and made no sound. Her little face was white as death, and drops of blood were oozing from her lips. In vain her terrified sister lifted her up, and called her by name, begging her wildly, with tears and kisses, only to speak to her once—just once! The drooping eyelids were not lifted; the little blood-stained mouth gave no sign of life; and Blanche, in that dreadful hour, realized her fault and its punishment with a suffering too sharp and bitter for words to reveal.

“I have killed her! I have killed my little sister — my dear, little, darling, beautiful sister!” she screamed aloud in her wild despair. And her voice rang through the woods with such bitter cries that it reached the ears of more than one person, and a group of people, some stran-

gers, some servants of the house, were soon hurrying to the spot.

Miss Loxley was among them, for she had discovered Blanche's escape, and missed little Alice, and was on her way to the wood to seek for them, when she heard those piercing shrieks, and recognized the voice that uttered them. She was the first to reach the place, and Blanche's punishment was complete when she met the governess's look of stern and sad reproach, as she raised up the poor little broken flower from the ground.

It was a mournful procession that marched from the woods, down the pleasant, green lane, through the barn-yard, where the ducks and geese cackled unconsciously as ever, across the shady lawn, and into the house, out of which those little feet, so motionless now, had gone merrily, an hour before. Servants and neighbors gathered weeping about her, for little Alice was the pet and darling of the household; and now, when it seemed as if she might never brighten the place again with her beauty and sweetness, there were many to tell how they would miss and mourn her.

But I need not make the story sadder than it really was. And the little life was given back after all. There were many days when her feet seemed close to the brink of the dark river — when a look, a breath almost, seemed enough to send the little fluttering spirit up to heaven.

Some thought it would have been better for her to have died then, than to go limping upon crutches always afterwards, *lame for life!* But God knew best. And Blanche — poor, penitent, heart-broken child! — never ceased to thank him for the life that he saved, “maimed and halt” as it was.

It was a hard “lesson” that she learned that day: spelling-book or grammar never held one half so hard! But the knowledge that came with such suffering was precious knowledge all the years of her life. Miss Loxley used to tell afterwards how the whole nature of the child had changed; how gentle, and patient, and submissive she had grown; how good and thoughtful, forever seeking to do a service for some one, and living “close to God” in her constant watchfulness and prayers.

As for little Alice — *she* used to say that it

was worth while to be lame when one had such a sister as Blanche — a sister who was more like a mother in her boundless love and tenderness. So out of the root of evil God chose to let a good fruit grow. But it is better to plant in the beginning the “precious seed,” which, of its own impulse, blossoms into “sheaves of rejoicing.”

JESSIE'S JOURNEY.

“LET me alone! let me alone!” screamed Jessie Joralemon. “If you don’t let me go, Horace, I’ll bite you now — so I will!”

“As to that, Jet, I can bite, too, you know,” said her big brother Horace. And, instead of letting her go, he tightened his grasp upon her bare, sunburnt shoulders.

“You’re a nice little girl now — aren’t you? Down here in the village, hale fellow well met with every little dirty brat you can find to play with you; your neck and arms uncovered, too, and your face just about the color of theirs. Well, you *are* a nice little sister — a fellow ought to be proud of you!”

“It’s none of a fellow’s business!” sobbed Jessie, angrily. “And I don’t care whether you are proud or not! You let me alone!”

“O, of course, it’s none of my business!” retorted Horace. “We’ll go home, though, and see whose business it is. Just march along, Miss

Jet, until we hear what mother has to say to you; and no biting now — remember!

It was in vain for Jessie to resist: her brother held her with a grasp that she could not shake off, and she was forced to walk beside him, and listen to his sarcastic speeches until they reached their home, when Mrs. Joralemon, standing on the piazza, was the first to meet them.

“Where have you been, Jessie? Horace, what is the matter?” she asked, immediately, seeing from the little girl’s flushed and tear-stained face that something had happened.

“Down in the village again,” said Horace, “making mud pies with half a dozen Irish youngsters round her. Nice little girl—ain’t she? But she says it’s none of my business, so I brought her home to see if it was any of yours. There—you can go now.”

And Horace gave her a little push towards her mother, and walked off whistling, with his hands in his pockets.

“What a naughty child you are, Jessie!” exclaimed Mrs. Joralemon, severely. “Down in the village again, after you have so often been forbidden, so often punished for going! Go up stairs to my room immediately; and, when your

father comes home, we shall see what he has to say to you."

Forlornly enough Jessie trudged up stairs, and seated herself in her mother's room, in the corner farthest out of sight. Her frock was torn and draggled, her face was stained with tears and perspiration and dirt, her finger-nails had the blackest of rims. Altogether she was a dismal little object to look upon, and one can hardly blame Horace for being disgusted with her, for it was not the first time she had been caught in this plight.

The village was her great temptation, though what made it so was not easy to understand. It was as ugly a little village as ever was seen, consisting of one long, straggling street of shabby houses and insignificant little shops, with a sort of common, or green, at one end, sloping down to a sluggish pond. Here ducks and geese and dirty children paddled and played at all hours of the day; and here Jessie had been found more than once before, and more than once before brought home in disgrace. There might have been some excuse for her if she had had no playmates at home; but when she had brothers and sisters in plenty, books and

playthings more than she knew what to do with, and two or three acres of lawn and garden and meadow, over which she was free to roam, it was certainly very silly, as well as very naughty, to behave as she did.

Jessie didn't see it, however, and, instead of feeling penitent and ashamed, as she sat alone in her corner, she only felt angry and insulted.

"I just don't care!" she said, wilfully. "I'll go again whenever I get a chance; and Horace is a disagreeable, ugly boy — that's what he is; and I've a great mind not to stay here any longer, but just go to New York and live with my grandfather! There, now!"

This was a threat that she frequently made when anything happened to vex her. Her grandfather — old Mr. Joshua Joralemon — was very fond of her; she was his favorite of all the children, in fact, and they knew it so well that they made a rhyme about it to tease her:—

"Here comes Jet,
Grandpa's pet."

Why he called her "Jet," instead of Jessie, nobody could tell, for she had red hair, and blue eyes, and there was nothing jetty whatever about

her. However, that was his name for her; and one day, when he was at Windy-Knowe on a visit, Miss Jet got into trouble, which was nothing remarkable for her either.

It wasn't her stumbling-block—the village; nor yet the meadow-brook, which was another of her pitfalls. It wasn't even green apples, nor the duck's eggs, but only the hay-stack, through which she came to grief. She had found a ladder leaning against it, and she had climbed up to the very top, and perched herself there with great satisfaction; but Broderick, coming along on the other side, and never seeing her, had marched off with the ladder. So, when Miss Jessie got ready to descend from her airy heights, she had no steps to help her, and she dared not slide down the steep and slippery sides. Of course she set up a scream immediately,—Jet always screamed; and that brought Joe, and Pussy, and Clem, all helter-skelter, to see what was the matter, and to shout with laughter when they discovered her ridiculous situation.

They got the ladder, and helped her down, but they laughed at her, and teased her all the time, until poor Jet was in a towering rage; in the midst of which grandpa came along, and took her part, saying, soothingly,—

“Don’t you mind them, Jet ; if they abuse you here, just run away, and come and live with me. *I’ll* take care of you.”

Of course he was only jesting with her ; but Jessie took it quite in earnest, and from that time, whenever she was angry, she avowed her determination to run away and live with her grandfather. Nobody heeded her, for nobody dreamed that she would ever undertake to do it, seeing that Windy-Knowe was at least thirty miles away from New York. But the idea had taken more serious hold of the child’s fancy than any one imagined ; and, as she sat alone this afternoon, brooding over her sense of wrong and ill-treatment, it came to her more and more seriously, until at last she jumped up with a resolute look upon her face, and exclaimed, half aloud, —

“I’ll just go, so I will ! I’ll not stay shut up here all the day, and I won’t be punished when my father comes home — all for nothing ! I’ve got some money of my own, and I’ll go to New York in the cars this very day — I will !”

No one was by to hear or see her, and so no one could stop the wild plan which she immediately set to work to carry out. The first thing was to wash her face and hands, and put on a

tidy dress ; and, as a pile of her own clean frocks had just been brought in from the laundry, and lay on her mother's bed waiting to be put away, she had no trouble in making the change without notice. This done, she stole softly out of the room, and crossed the hall, to the little chamber where she slept with Pussy.

The door was open, and no one in sight. She got her best hat and mantle out of the closet, and dressed herself quickly in them ; and then, from a little box in which she kept her particular treasures, she took a tiny little gilt porte-monnaie. In this there were four new three-cent pieces, two half dimes, and a little gold dollar, all of which had been given her by her grandfather at different times. She did not know how much a ticket to New York would cost, but the gold dollar seemed an inexhaustible treasure, not to speak of the three-cent pieces ; and she had no doubt of being able to reach the city, if only she could escape from the house without being seen.

There is an old story that tells about two angels who follow us wherever we go ; and one helps and encourages us in good works, and the other in evil. Jessie's bad angel must have taken great pains for her that day, otherwise I

do not know how she could have managed to get out of the house, where so many people were always going to and fro, and out of the grounds where some of the children were always at play, without being seen by somebody. She certainly did, however, and marched straight along the public road to the railway station, entirely uninterrupted.

She knew nothing about the hours at which the trains left for New York, but it so happened that a down train was due in a very few minutes after she reached the depot. The people were all standing outside upon the platform, waiting for it; and Jessie had only time to buy her ticket at the office, before a snorting sound in the distance, a puff of white steam blown forward by the wind, and then a rushing, fiery gallop of the iron horse down the hill, announced the arrival of the train.

There were only two or three passengers besides herself at this hour of the day; and as if everything happened to help her in her naughty plan, they were all strangers to Jessie, and all too much in a hurry to get aboard to take any notice of the solitary little girl who followed after them, climbed up the steps without help from

any father or brother, and took her seat in the far end of the car, as much out of sight as possible. In a minute more the iron horse gave another puff and snort, and plunged away again; and Jessie Joralemon was fairly started upon her journey.

She looked out of the window with a triumphant feeling, as the clatter-clatter of the engine grew louder and faster, and the station-house, with its familiar landmarks around, was left far behind.

“Now I am free!” she thought, exultingly. “I guess Master Horace won’t fetch me home again in a hurry — ugly thing! and mamma will be sorry for shutting me up, when she finds I am gone. Grandpapa will treat me better, I know he will; and I’ll stay with him all the time, and coax him not to let papa or anybody know where I am.”

Pleasant visions of the gay life she would lead at grandpapa’s rose up in her imagination. No lessons to learn, no hemming or knitting to do, no music to practise, no big brother Horace to hector over her; she would lie in bed as long as she liked every morning, and sit up late every night; she would have strong coffee for breakfast, and

floating-island for dessert; she would go to the Museum, and the Central Park, and the Circus, and have no end of nuts and raisins every evening. As for ice-cream and jelly-cake, she'd soon find out how much would make her sick. Wasn't Jet grandpa's pet? and she *guessed* she could do as she chose in *his* house — there, now!

Clatter-clatter up hill and down dale, thundering over bridges, flashing past green meadows and silvery streams, puffing and snorting through pretty way-side villages, rushing into tunnels full of smoky darkness, darting out again into fresh air and sunlight — away went the iron horse, carrying little Jessie Joralemon farther and farther from her safe and quiet home at Windy-Knowe, nearer and nearer to the noise and bustle and bewilderment of the great, strange city. She was not afraid; the novelty and excitement of her adventure had not yet given place to any fears for its safe termination, and the swift, exhilarating motion was delightful to her daring spirit. So the first hour of her journey was all enjoyment: satisfaction at having made her escape so cleverly, anticipation of the welcome she would receive from her grandfather, and pleasure in the very journey itself.

But there came a change to this pleasant state of feeling. The first thing that caused it was the sudden coming up of a summer storm. The pretty fleecy clouds that had been sailing so brightly over the blue sky grew all at once dark and lowering; the trees began to bend before a rising wind, and soon great drops of rain came dashing up against the window beside which Jessie sat. She did not mind it much at first, being sheltered for the time, and not thinking how disagreeable it would be to be landed in the city streets in a drenching rain. But the discontented looks of the people around her, and their expressions of annoyance as the shower increased, made her presently realize her situation. She began to watch anxiously, as the others did, for some break in the clouds that should give a promise of sunshine by and by. But none came: the sky darkened more and more, and the rain fell with a steady persistence that proved it no mere transient shower.

Meanwhile the train sped swiftly on, and they were rapidly nearing the city. Soon the little Irish cabins, perched among the rocks, came in sight; Jessie could see the goats huddling together in the rain, and bare-footed, shock-headed

children running out in spite of it, to look at the cars. Then came groups of houses of a better order; then long, ugly, grimy factories, and presently the engine began to slacken speed, and the bell to ring out its warning, for they were fairly in the city streets. People gathered up their luggage, and wrapped up their children; those who were so lucky as to have umbrellas brought them out for use; those who had none grumbled audibly at the provoking rain. But it rained on in spite of them; and Jessie, who had nobody to speak to, looked in dismay at the streams of water rushing down the window-pane, and wondered how she would ever reach her grandfather's house.

Her pretty Leghorn hat, with its white ribbon and curling ostrich plume, her new black silk basque, and her white cambric dress, would all be in a sad plight before she could reach Second Avenue; for there was no omnibus running across from Fourth to Second Avenue, and she knew that she would have to walk every step of the way. It was only about half a mile — nothing to speak of in pleasant weather; but half a mile in a pouring rain, with no umbrella, and your best clothes on, becomes a serious matter;

and the more Jessie thought about it, the more serious it became to her.

By the time the cars stopped, a good deal of her self-complacency had departed. She began to think that perhaps grandpapa wouldn't altogether approve of what she had done, after all; and an uncomfortable misgiving stole over her, that Mrs. Bunn, the housekeeper, would consider the whole proceeding highly improper; especially if she arrived with her clothes all drenched and ruined, as they certainly would be, the way this rain was coming down. And then there would be no dry things for her to put on, for there were no children about the house, and she could hardly wear grandpapa's clothes, or Mrs. Bunn's either, for that matter.

But there was no help for it now, and she must make the best of it. So she got out of the car, and followed the crowd into the ladies' room at the depot, trying to look perfectly self-possessed and unconcerned; for she was conscious that people were noticing her, and making remarks about so young a child being left to travel alone. A great many curious glances were directed to her, but nobody spoke; for Jessie was a proud little thing, and her face wore such an indepen-

dent, half-defiant expression, that no one felt at liberty to question her.

She sat down by a window, and waited a while, to see if the rain would cease; but waiting is tiresome work to the most patient of people, and Jessie, not having any gift that way, found it desperately "slow." She soon made up her mind that it was going to rain all night, and she might as well get wet first as last. So she tied her pocket-handkerchief over her hat, by way of protection to its white ribbons, and marched out into the street.

A crowd of hack-drivers, in shiny oil-skin coats, all streaming with rain, were hanging round, tormenting people to "have a carriage, sir? have a carriage?" men were hurrying to and fro with baggage, people jostling each other with umbrellas, and such a general bustle and hubbub going on, that Jessie could hardly make her way to the corner. She squeezed, and pushed, and twisted in and out of the crowd, until she got across the wide avenue, with its tumult of trains and vehicles passing and repassing in such perilous confusion, and found herself safe at last in the quieter street below. But, O, how dripping and drowned she felt

already! Her shoes were soaked up to her ankles; her white dress clung to her like a wet rag; and her hat, in spite of the handkerchief, was hopelessly ruined in three minutes' time.

No matter, she must go on. And on she went, growing wetter and wetter, as the pitiless rain pelted down upon her. Children looked out of their nursery windows, and laughed at her, as she ran dripping by; and mothers wondered how any other mother could leave her child so unprotected. But Jessie ran on desperately, jumping over gutters swollen with muddy water, and getting more than one slide and fall upon the slippery flags, until at last she came in sight of her grandfather's house.

Never was there a more welcome sight to the drenched and breathless child. She hurried up the steps, and gave the bell such a pull, quite indifferent for the minute to Mrs. Bunn's opinion, she was so eager to get under shelter. The ringing sound echoed through the house, and came back clearly to her ears; but no sound of voice or footstep, in answer to it, followed. She rang again, loudly and impatiently. The tinkling echoes were again the only reply. She looked up at the windows; the shutters were all closed

— there was no sign of anybody stirring about the house.

Jessie's heart sank with the worst fear she had known yet. But it was too terrible to believe in without making another effort; and so she rang again, and again, and again, jerking the bell-handle till she almost snapped the wire. It was all to no purpose. No one came to let her in, and she was forced to believe the truth at last — miserable Jessie! — that her grandfather and Mrs. Bunn were both away from home; and she — poor, forlorn little runaway — had nowhere in all the great city to go for shelter.

She felt so overwhelmed at first that she could not even cry, but stood and stared stupidly at the heavy oak door, as if she expected it to open of its own accord. Then all the wretchedness of her situation seemed to come upon her like a sudden flood, and she crouched down upon the wet stone steps, and cried as if her heart would break. Poor, little, desolate, naughty Jet! She did not look much like *anybody's* "pet" as she sat there sobbing in the rain, so dirty and draggled and forsaken that they might have used her for a scarecrow in the cornfield.

What was she to do? Wherever was she to

go? She did not know anybody in all New York — not a single soul; and she would have to wander in the streets all night, or maybe be taken up by a policeman and put in the station-house. O, dear, if she only hadn't run away! if she could only get home again! But here it was, raining so hard, and getting darker all the time. It was almost night now, she was sure; and she should never get home any more. She should die in the streets, and never see mamma again, and nobody would know what became of her!

These were the despairing thoughts of her first distress; but by and by, when she grew a little calmer, a more sensible idea than that of dying in the streets came to her. It was simply to go home again, the same way she had come; and, although that was certainly humiliating, it was nevertheless better than sitting all night on grand-papa's doorsteps.

You see Jet was a sensible child, after all, in spite of her naughtiness. She proved it by getting up at once, and making her way back to the New Haven depot as speedily as possible. The children, watching at their nursery windows, saw her go past again, and shouted, —

“There goes that little girl again! Only see what a draggletail!”

And their mothers pitied her once more, and wondered what could have happened to the child. Jessie could not hear them; but she would not have cared for what they said if she had. She only cared now to reach the depot in time for the train that would take her home; and she hurried on with wild haste, plunging through pools of muddy water without a thought of her clothes, though to be sure they were past being injured now.

It was the good angel, I think, that lent her a helping hand at this time; for she reached the depot just as a car was about to go out to join the up-train. A few minutes later, and she would have had to wait a whole hour, which would have made the matter much worse than it was; and it was quite bad enough already, Jessie thought. She was heartily thankful when she found herself seated in the car, and knew that her face was fairly turned homewards; and, notwithstanding all that had happened, she was in a much better humor than when she had started for the city.

Meanwhile, what had been going on at Windy-

Knowe? The first thing that happened, of importance, was the unexpected arrival of Mr. Joshua Joralemon, and his good housekeeper, Mrs. Bunn. Grandpapa had taken a whim to spend a day or two at Windy-Knowe; and, as it was the height of the currant and raspberry season, Mrs. Bunn thought she would improve the opportunity to make jelly.

There was a shout of delight and surprise at the sight of them, and then a general outcry, "Where's Jet? Call Jet to see grandpa!"

And a dozen voices called Jet, up stairs and down; but no Jet responded. Mrs. Joralemon remembered that she had been sent up in disgrace, and went to her room to look for her. But she did not find her, as we know very well; and nobody else could find her, though a general and particular search was instituted immediately.

Horace went down to the village, and the other children scattered round in every direction to look for the truant. But all their efforts were in vain, of course; and then everybody grew frightened, Mrs. Joralemon especially, for she was sure that something terrible had happened to the child, and could hardly be persuaded that

her body would not be found, finally, drowned in the pond on the village green. When her father came home, he found the household in the greatest distress. The heavy rain had compelled them to give up their search for the lost child, and they were all gathered together indoors, in a state of despair. Mrs. Joralemon was standing at a window, very quiet, but pale as death. Some of the children were sobbing in a sort of nervous terror; and poor Horace, who some way felt as if he was guilty of all the trouble, watched his mother and the rain by turns, and wished he had been in Jericho before ever he had meddled with Jet and her mud pies.

Just as miserable as Jessie had been in New York the whole family were at Windy-Knowe. Mr. Joralemon and grandpapa got into the light wagon, and drove off to make inquiries at all the neighbors' houses. The others stopped at home, watching the dreary rain, and waiting, in anxious expectation, for they knew not what. Mischievous and troublesome as Jet too often was, they all loved her dearly; and the thought of any harm coming to her made every heart heavy with sorrow and dread.

So the time wore on, sadly enough. And at

last the rain ceased to fall, and the clouds cleared away, just in time to let the sun throw a parting glow over the wet, green leaves. It lighted up the room so brightly, for a moment, that a gleam of hope flashed up almost as suddenly in their hearts. Nobody said anything; but all at once Horace rushed to the window, and gave a great shout.

“Hallo, mother! there she is! Here comes Jet, grandpa’s pet!”

And, before any one had time to take breath, he had jumped through the window out upon the wet grass, and was tearing down the gravel walk towards a little, forlorn, limp, draggled, disreputable object, that was creeping, slow and ashamed, up to the house.

“Master Horace won’t fetch me home again in a hurry!” Jessie had said to herself, as she rode in triumph to New York. She did not dream how soon he would have it to do, and how meekly she would submit to it!

“Well, Jet, where under the sun have you been?” he began, as he seized her. But she burst into tears for her only answer; and Horace said not another word, but just snatched her up in his arms, and carried her bodily to the piazza.

where everybody had collected by this time, full of joyful excitement at her safe return. There he put her into her mother's hands, as he had done once before that day, and said, as he did so, —

“Now, Jet, I'll tell you what. You may go down to the village every day of your life after this; and I'll never meddle with you again while my name's Horace Joralemon. Bet your boots on that!”

And he walked off, whistling once more. But Jet sprang after him, and threw her arms round his neck. “I'll never go again, Horace, never! I'll promise, upon my word and honor; and I'm — so — *sorry!*”

But she broke down here with a jerk, and finished up her confessions with a good hearty fit of crying, in the midst of which she was carried off up stairs, to be dressed in dry clothes, and made decent to look at. I am happy to state, however, that she made a point of keeping that promise; and every one declares that Jet's unlucky journey has taught her a better lesson than she ever learned at school.

LOUISE'S BIRTHDAY.

“O THANKSGIVING comes on the twenty-seventh this year! Isn't that nice?”

Louise Ashley had picked up the morning paper, dropped on the floor as her father left the breakfast-table, and the governor's proclamation of Thanksgiving, just issued, had been the first thing to catch her eye.

“Did you hear, mamma? Thanksgiving comes on my birthday again,” she repeated, as her mother, who was busy writing out a list for the day's supplies, took no notice of the first exclamation.

“Very well, my dear,” was the rather absent answer given then, and Mrs. Ashley glanced over her list, to see if she had forgotten nothing.

“Run down to the kitchen, Louise, and ask Kate if it was fine hominy or samp that she wanted, and whether there is cold meat enough in the pantry to do for dinner to day. O! and if the grocer's boy left the pass-book yesterday.”

Louise pushed her chair back from the table, and went briskly to do her mother's bidding. She was always quick to comprehend and deliver a message, and she was back again immediately, with the book in her hand, and the cook's instructions.

"Kate says there's plenty of meat, mamma, and she wants fine hominy for hominy-balls. And, mamma, hadn't you better send for some raisins for the fruit cake and plum puddings? It takes so long to stone them, you know, and I could do it in the evenings, after I learned my lessons, if the raisins were here."

"Fruit cake and plum puddings! My dear, what *are* you talking about?" her mother asked, in surprise.

"Why, Thanksgiving, of course! Didn't you hear me say just now it comes on the twenty-seventh? And I can have a party, as I did when it came on my birthday before—can't I, mamma?"

Mrs. Ashley's face grew grave all at once. "I am afraid not, Louise," she said, gently. "You must content yourself without a birthday party this year, my daughter."

"I wonder why?" Louise gave her shoul-

ders an impatient jerk, always a sign of rising temper with her. "I am sure you said 'Very well,' when I spoke of it at first," she went on, fretfully; "and now you tell me I can't have it after all. I think it's too bad!"

"And I also think it is 'too bad,' Louise, that you should speak to your mother so disrespectfully," Mrs. Ashley said, quietly.

"But, mamma, I *do* want the party so much! *Why* can't I have it? We had such a nice time before, — Thanksgiving and a birthday together, — and I always thought it would be exactly the same whenever Thanksgiving fell on the twenty-seventh."

"You can have a nice time still, my dear. I mean that you shall. You know I never forget your birthday, and that I *always* try to make Thanksgiving pleasant. Your aunt and cousins will be here to dinner, and we will all have a merry evening."

"O, pshaw!" with another jerk of the shoulders. "I can see my aunt and cousins any time. That isn't half as nice as a party, and I don't see why I mayn't have one."

"Let me tell you, then, Louise," Mrs. Ashley said, gently, not noticing the little girl's rude

manner; for she pitied her disappointment, and regretted being obliged to inflict it. "You are old enough to understand something about the war that is going on, and the high prices that have been put upon everything; and, when I tell you that we cannot *afford* to give you a party, you will understand the reason."

"But I am sure we are not so very poor," said Louise, discontentedly. "I heard papa tell you myself that *his* business was *very* good this fall."

"There is so much the more reason, then, for us to help others who *are* poor," her mother answered. "Everything is so dear — food, and fuel, and clothing — that poor people, and even people who in better times would be able to live comfortably, will have to suffer severely this winter, unless others, better supplied, are willing to help them. For that reason I say we cannot afford to spend money upon a party, when it is needed so much to feed the hungry, and clothe the naked. I should think you would feel that yourself, my daughter, without any more words from me."

"I suppose *I shall have to*, any way," Louise said, sullenly, under her breath, as she moved

away from her mother. Mrs. Ashley heard the ungracious speech, and it made her sad all day ; but she did not notice it then, for she saw that Louise was not in a mood to be benefited by any more talking. She folded up her housekeeping list, and went up stairs to find Mr. Ashley, leaving her daughter to get over her ill-humor alone, and hoping that by and by she would come into a happier temper.

But the little girl's disappointment was deeper than her mother understood. She had been talking with her schoolmates about Thanksgiving, and boasting, as little girls are apt to, of the great things that would happen if it fell on her birthday. She had promised to invite her favorite companions to the party that she was sure to have ; and they had consulted together upon the important question of party dresses, Louise asserting that she meant to have a new silk, trimmed with I don't know how many ruffles around the skirt, and any quantity of gilt buttons everywhere else ! Now it would all have to be taken back, — party and invitations, gilt buttons, and everything, — and the mortification of this was worse than the actual loss of the party.

She went to school that morning in a very uncomfortable state of mind, and it was not bettered by her first greeting from Kitty Price, the most particular of her school friends.

“O, Louise!” was the eager salutation, followed by a rapturous kiss, as the two little maidens met in the play-room. “Papa read out of the paper this morning that Thanksgiving Day was announced, and only think, it *really* falls on your birthday! Isn’t it lovely?”

“I wish it *didn’t*!” Louise answered, angrily; and when Kitty exclaimed, “O!” with her round eyes of wonder and dismay, she went on still more petulantly:—

“Why, I can’t have my birthday party at all, just for a foolish notion of mamma’s. She says the times are so hard for poor people, and we ought to help them, and not spend money for parties. And so I’ve got to give up all my pleasure just for that. I’m so provoked I don’t know what to do.”

She knew very well that she should not be doing *this*; that if her mother could hear her saying such things, she would be both grieved and indignant. But in her vexation she did not care to do right, and so said a great many things

that she had to blush for afterwards when she remembered them. Kitty, of course, sympathized and condoled with her; but, in spite of her friendship, she could not help triumphing a little. Louise had boasted so much, and now it had all come to nothing! Some of the other girls, when they came to hear of it, expressed the same feeling more openly; and, before the day was over, poor Louise had a great deal to bear in the way of pretended pity and mocking taunts about the sudden failure of all her grand plans.

Of course she came home in no amiable mood when school was over at last. She had only been sullen when she went away in the morning; now she was irritable and passionate. The door-bell was pulled with a force that threatened to snap the wires; her books slammed down upon the hall-table with the same violence; and when her little brother Hal came running to meet her, with his loving cry, "Weezy tome home, see Hally!" she would not even give the dear little fellow a look to pay for his welcome.

"Out of my way!" was her only greeting; and she brushed by him so roughly that his unsteady little feet lost their balance, and he toppled over on the oil-cloth, getting a bruise

that lingered for a week, to reproach his sister for her unkindness.

She did not even stop to pick him up then, however, but went on up stairs to her own room, where she shut herself in for the rest of the afternoon. Mrs. Ashley had gone out to make some calls, and did not return till nearly dinner-time, so that nobody interrupted Louise's solitude, and she was at liberty to indulge her sulks to their utmost extent. This liberty she improved so largely that, when she came down to dinner at last, she made herself disagreeable to everybody, and twice drew upon herself a rebuke from her father for impertinent replies to her mother.

The evening passed quite as unhappily. Louise was determined to feel herself aggrieved, and, though her mother showed her the greatest kindness and consideration, trying to talk to her and interest her in other things, she still refused to be mollified. She sulked off to bed without kissing any one good night, and went to sleep without saying her prayers—a very unhappy, as she was certainly a very naughty, little girl.

Things went on in this way for several days. Louise had a great faculty for sulking, and could

not easily give up her sense of an injury. It was kept alive at school, also, by the frequent comments of Kitty Price and others; and Mrs. Ashley was much distressed by this wilful persistence in a temper so unlovely. She had thought at first that she would take no notice of it, but trust to Louise's own good sense to make her ashamed of it. But she finally determined to talk seriously with her, and make her see, if possible, how wrong and foolish her behavior was.

She called her into her room one day, and talked with her a long time, earnestly and lovingly. She told her how much suffering and poverty there was through the land already, how much more there certainly would be, and how religious a duty it was for every one, who could spare anything at all from their own means, to assist in relieving these bitter necessities. She asked her if she could be happy, wearing her costly party dress, and entertaining her little friends with music and dancing, and expensive refreshments, while she knew that other children were suffering with cold and hunger?

Louise knew in her heart that she *could not* be; that her mother was right in everything, and she herself altogether wrong; yet an evil spirit

of pride lingered in her, and would not let her say so. She could not bear to acknowledge her selfishness, and confess that she was wrong. So, after all her tender remonstrances, Mrs. Ashley had to go away sad and unsatisfied, and leave her wilful daughter to her own sullen companionship. Louise was ashamed and sorry as soon as her mother had left the room, but it was too late then to say so, and Mrs. Ashley never alluded to the subject again.

So days and weeks went on, and Thanksgiving Day was near at hand. There were no great preparations for it at the Ashleys', as there had been in other years. The grocer brought no boxes of raisins, no almonds and oranges, no citron and spices; and instead of the large loaves of rich fruit-cake, and the ample plum puddings that used to be made for days beforehand, Kate seemed only to be making the greatest quantity of gingerbread, and plain cookies, and pumpkin pies.

Mrs. Ashley in the parlors busied herself with much sewing. Every evening, for weeks past, she had been working upon garments that Louise knew would never be worn in their own family. Now it was a child's frock or apron, then a flan-

nel petticoat, or a warm quilted one ; some were made of old dresses of her own ; others were pieced of odds and ends ; all were plain and simple, but strong and serviceable for use, and evidently intended for poor people. Louise saw that her mother was putting her charitable theories into practice. She often longed to help her when she saw her stitching up the coarse seams so patiently every evening, but her assistance was never asked, and she felt too proud and ashamed to volunteer it.

One morning, at the breakfast table, her mother said to her, " Louise, ask Miss Derby, to-day, if she will be kind enough to excuse you from school this afternoon. I want you to go out with me, and I would like you to come home to luncheon."

Louise's face brightened, more in the old way than her mother had seen it lately, and her " Thank you, mamma," sounded full of pleasure. It was always a treat to go out with her mother, and she appreciated it the more now for feeling that she had not deserved it of late.

Mrs. Ashley saw her gratification, and her work that morning, pleasant work as it was, was made all the pleasanter by her remembrance of

Louise's bright, grateful manner, so different from the sullen looks she had worn so long.

The work began just as soon as the breakfast dishes were removed from the table. Kate brought in a number of baskets, some large, some small, and ranged them on the floor; then she brought in pumpkin pies, two at a time, till there was a long row upon the dining-table; then came loaves of gingerbread, and large dishes filled with caraway cookies, and sugar cakes, in fanciful shapes of hearts, and stars, and oak leaves; then a great basket of apples, and another of walnuts, black and brown; then two or three pieces of roast beef, two or three more of pork, and two pairs of fat chickens; then potatoes, and turnips, and cabbages; then loaves of bread; and, last of all, some small parcels, from which the pleasant fragrance of tea stole out into the room.

Mrs. Ashley filled one basket after another, selecting from the stores on the table just what she knew was needed in each family. In some she put meat, and a plentiful supply of vegetables, where she knew there was a crowd of hungry little mouths to be filled; in others she would put only a pie, a few apples, and a little

tea and sugar, for some poor old woman, perhaps, who lived alone, and would be glad of the unexpected treat for her Thanksgiving dinner.

The table was emptied, at last, of all its abundance, and every basket well filled. The warm garments she had made were neatly folded on top of them, and each basket had its card of direction securely fastened and plainly written, so that the expressman who was to call for them should make no mistake in delivering them to their proper owners.

There was no trace of the morning's work in the room when Louise made her appearance at luncheon, for the express wagon had rattled away with the whole load of baskets an hour before. But, although nothing had been said about it, she felt secretly conscious that her mother was going to take her to see some of the poor people whom she often visited herself. She was not surprised, therefore, when Mrs. Ashley got out of the car, and turned off the avenue into a shabby side street that Louise had never been in before.

"You are not tired, I hope, my dear? We have got to walk down to York street," her

mother said. And they went on, block after block, the houses growing more shabby all the way, until at last they reached a dingy-looking street of tumble-down tenement-houses and miserable little shops. Half way down the block an old wooden church, with a cross on the spire, reared itself among the wretched buildings around; and Mrs. Ashley, passing by this, entered one of the poorest houses, two doors beyond. Dirty children were around the doors, and ragged, slatternly women stared at them as they mounted the rickety stairs; but Mrs. Ashley went on, as one accustomed to the place, never stopping till she reached the topmost room. There she knocked at the door, and it was opened by a young Irish woman, whose simple face brightened into grateful pleasure at the sight of her visitor.

“O, blessins on yez! Sure an’ yer the lady that I’m always glad to see, thin,” she broke out in Irish fashion. And two little children, pretty in spite of dirty faces, crowded up to Mrs. Ashley, as if they, too, were “always glad” to see this lady.

Louise looked round her in painful wonder when she was seated at last in the room. Never

before had she seen a place so destitute of all comforts as that seemed to be. There were two chairs only in the room; she and her mother occupied those, and the Irish woman, Mary Dunlevy, sat on an old wooden block. A half-post bedstead, with a patched calico quilt, stood in one corner of the room; a rickety table was between the windows; a shelf with a few bits of crockery in another corner; and an old cooking-stove in the fireplace. This was all the furniture. The children wore frocks that Louise easily recognized as having once belonged to her little brother Hal, and Mrs. Dunlevy herself was dressed in a cast-off wrapper of her mother's.

Yet miserable and poverty-stricken as everything about her was, there was a cheerful patience in this woman's look and words that even Louise could feel. She seemed so happy to see Mrs. Ashley that Louise could not help thinking how few pleasures she must have in her life when such a little thing made her so glad! She listened with a sense of shame and regret, that grew deeper all the time, to the talk that went on between her mother and Mary Dunlevy. The children had each been made happy by

the gift of an apple, — produced, to Louise's amazement, from her mother's pocket, — and were sitting in a corner munching them in perfect satisfaction. The mother was telling, in the simplest words, how she had had to struggle to keep her children from starving since her husband "went to the war."

"An' if it wasn't for yur, ma'am," she said, "I'm sure I don't know where me an' the little fellows 'ud ha' been now. It was the blessed Lord that sent me to your house that day, sure; though, indade, ma'am, 'twas a heavy heart that went wid me."

"I remember the day very well," said Mrs. Ashley. "Everything looked very dark to you then. But you get on better now?"

"O, yis, ma'am!" — and Louise wondered at her bright smile. "We've never had to go hungry since that day. There's two or three ladies that give me work steady besides yourself; and the little fellows are hearty now, since Johnny got well o' that burn. The father 'll come back to us some day, I'm thinking, an' you'll not forget us, I know."

"Of course not; and there is some One else, better than I, who will not forget you either. You must remember that,"

“ Sure, an’ I do, thin. I wouldn’t be like to forget him after his leadin’ my feet straight to you ! O, indade I know I have a great dale to be thankful for, an’ so I am.”

“ Well, I hope you will have a happy day to-morrow,” Mrs. Ashley said, kindly. “ My expressman hasn’t been here yet — has he ? He has got a basket for you somewhere, with some little things for your Thanksgiving dinner ; a nice big cooky for you, Johnny, and another for little Mike.”

“ An’ one for my mudder, too ? ” asked Johnny, anxiously.

“ O, yes, one for your mudder, too,” Mrs. Ashley answered, laughingly. “ You are a good little boy to look out for your mother, Johnny. But now I must go away ; and you watch out of the window till you see the expressman. The basket will be sure to come by and by.”

Mrs. Dunlevy’s grateful thanks followed them to the door, and Louise saw how her eyes filled with tears as she clasped her mother’s outstretched hand. “ Mamma, what a grateful creature she is ! ” she exclaimed, enthusiastically, when they were fairly outside. “ And how patiently she talks, when she must be so very, *very* poor ! ”

“She has had to support herself and those babies for more than two years,” said Mrs. Ashley. “Her husband was in South Carolina when the war began. Some railroad work had been offered to him, and he left his wife, thinking to come back in a few months, and bring her a snug little sum of money. Instead of that he was forced to join the Confederate army at the beginning of the war, and for six months fought against the Union — very unwillingly he says. After that he got an opportunity to escape, by giving himself up as a prisoner to some Northern pickets; and six months ago his wife had a letter from him, dated from Fort Delaware, where he had been imprisoned. That letter had been detained a long time, so that when she sent her answer to Fort Delaware, he was gone from there, nobody knew where. Since then she has never heard a word from him, and doesn’t know whether he’s living or dead. He has never sent her a dollar, and she has to support those helpless little children whatever way she can. She came to my house one day last summer, destitute and heart-broken. One child was in her arms, crying with the pain of a bad burn; the other was clinging to her skirts, crying for

something to eat. And she was half frantic between them, without a penny, or a crust of bread, or a friend to turn to. You see how poverty-stricken her condition is still, Louise, and yet you heard her say how thankful she was."

"O, mamma! I think it is perfectly pitiful!" Louise exclaimed. "I am so ashamed — so sorry —"

Her voice broke down, fairly choked with tears. But her mother knew what she meant to say.

"Then you think I was right about the party, after all? You would rather Mary Dunlevy had a ton of coal, to keep her warm all winter, than to have a new silk dress yourself? Because I could not have afforded both, you know."

"I *never* want another silk dress!" Louise cried, with emphasis. "I'll do without everything — I'll wear my old hat this winter — I'll do anything in the world, mamma, if you'll only forget how hatefully I behaved about that party. If you knew how ashamed of myself I have been all along! But I was too proud to tell you so."

"Too proud to tell your mother? O, Louise!"

And that tone of sorrowful reproach made the

child more ashamed and penitent than anything else could have done. She vowed in her heart that she never again would grieve her mother by her sullen, unlovely tempers; and that this should be a lesson to her as long as she lived.

But there was not time to say any more about it, for Mrs. Ashley had found another of her poor people, and was climbing up another flight of tumble-down stairs, whose worn steps creaked under their feet as they mounted. This time it was an old woman that she went to see — a poor old creature, whose wrinkled cheeks and trembling, misshapen hands told of many a sorrow and many a hardship. But her homely old face was lighted up now with beaming smiles. Mrs. Ashley's messenger had been there, and the contents of the basket — a pie, a paper of tea and sugar, a loaf of cake, some apples, and best of all, a nice, thick, calico double-gown — were spread out around her.

It made the girl's heart thrill with a pride and love for her mother that she had never felt before, as she saw these tokens of her thoughtfulness and tender charity, and heard poor old widow Maloney pouring out thanks and blessings upon her. She began to wonder if she

herself could not do something to deserve these blessings of the widow and orphan ; and before she went home that day the wondering thought resolved itself into a purpose.

If you could look into the prettily-furnished chamber that Louise had for her own, some Saturday afternoon, and see the busy group gathered there, — Kitty Price, with her auburn curls and saucy smile ; Lily Delano, grave and gentle, but with such swift fingers at her needle ; Harriet Macaulay, and Mabel Shonnard, and Ida Pierson, all as busy as bees in a hive, — you might guess what the purpose was. Some time I may tell you a story about this little sewing society, organized by Louise and her companions, and the results achieved by it ; but now I must finish my history of the visits made that afternoon.

There was one to see a child, about as old as Louise, whose foot had been crushed in stepping off a ferry-boat. She had suffered dreadful pain, and the doctor said it would be a year before she could stand on the foot again. Louise thought, as she looked at the child's pale cheeks and hollow eyes, that before the year was out the poor foot would be at rest forever, never to

know any more pain. But still she sat up in her chair, patient and smiling, "trying to help a little," as she said, by wrapping wire for some factory work that her sister was busy with. There was a Thanksgiving basket for them, and the sick child watched, with happy eyes, the large orange, and the glass of ruby-colored jelly, put in expressly for herself.

In another house there was a family of fatherless children, made so by the war. The father had been buried on the bloody battle-field of Antietam, and poverty was beginning to be felt, in addition to the sore and recent grief. It was little that Mrs. Ashley could do to comfort them in such trouble; still Louise could see how her tender words of sympathy went straight to the poor mother's heart, and how the generous supply of provisions and needful garments went far to lighten her heavy load of anxiety.

"We shall have a day of Thanksgiving, ma'am, in spite of our sorrow," she said. "God is good to us still."

"Indeed he is; indeed he always will be," Mrs. Ashley answered, earnestly. "He has promised to take care of the widows and the orphans, you know, and he will never forsake

you while you trust in him. It is very, very hard often, I know ; but he sees what is best, and he does not leave us comfortless."

"My mother is the best woman in the world," thought Louise, as they went away ; and the conviction grew stronger as she followed her from one poor home of sorrow and suffering to another, and saw how everywhere she left bright faces and grateful hearts behind her. There was a sick baby in one room, that moaned and fretted in its cradle when she went in. The mother was ironing, and had no time to hold it ; but Mrs. Ashley took it up as tenderly as if it had been her own, bathed its little hot face, and rocked it softly on her knee until it was soothed into quiet sleep.

In another room, in the same tenement, a woman was dying with consumption ; and here, besides the Thanksgiving basket, Louise recognized a dozen things that she knew had come from her mother. The old-fashioned rocking-chair, with its comfortable cushions, she had missed from the attic not long since ; the white sheet and pillow-slip on which the poor, pale cheek rested, were marked "*Ashley* ;" the jar of orange marmalade on the dresser had her

mother's handwriting on the label; and there were books on the little table beside the bed that Louise had seen many a time before. Her mother took up one of these, and read to the sick woman some tender words of hope, and faith, and patience, that brought a look of peace and gladness to her eyes.

"To-morrow is Thanksgiving Day," said Mrs. Ashley, when she rose to go. "It will be spent in weakness and pain, perhaps, by you; but you will feel, I am sure, that you have something to be thankful for still."

"God bless you, ma'am; indeed I will. You have made all my days Thanksgiving days," was the loving answer.

So they went home in the deepening twilight; Louise with a heart full of new and tender thoughts, and her mother glad and grateful to see that the evil spirit of pride and selfishness was banished at last. The bright windows of their own home flashed out a welcome to them as they reached it; and there was Hal's dear little nose flattened up against the pane, on the watch for them. You may be sure "Weezy" gave him kisses enough this time!

And then came the morning — Louise's birthday, and Thanksgiving Day too. Her father and her mother gave her, each, a loving kiss when she came down to prayers; and little Hal rushed up to her, holding something gathered up in his frock, and shouting out, —

“I'se dot a p'esent for you, Weezy! Hally's dot a birseday p'esent for you!”

And what should it be but a beautiful photograph album, bound in green morocco, with her own initials in relief upon the cover, — the very thing she had been wishing for. Inside were a lot of pictures, too, that she had never seen; a lovely vignette of her mother, in the first place, with that sweet, *spirituelle* expression that Louise had never fully appreciated until yesterday. Then a fine likeness of her father, and the most charming picture of cunning little Hal, in a cocked hat, with a toy gun on his shoulder. There were some sweet little baby pictures of Louise herself, copied from old daguerreotypes, and a set of the “Palmer Marbles” besides. So that her album was half full already.

Altogether it was a most satisfactory birthday, although there was no party, and no new dress. Louise wore her blue merino to church, but

never thought of its being a last winter's frock, and quite old-fashioned in comparison with Kitty's Price's plaid poplin, made in the latest "Zouave" style. The sermon had a great deal to say about the duty of remembering the poor, and how the right way to prove our own thankfulness was to help others to be thankful also; and Louise thought of what she had seen yesterday, and it did not occur to her to notice who wore handsome dresses or who didn't.

They never had a merrier dinner party, either, although there was not the least bit of plum pudding for dessert. Everybody praised Kate's pumpkin pies, however, — "the genuine, far-famed, Yankee pumpkin pie," — and the children had plenty of apples and nuts, and molasses candy of their own making, which they declared to be a great deal nicer than French sugar plums.

"It's the happiest birthday I ever had, mamma," Louise said, when her mother came to kiss her good night, after she had gone to bed. "I thought about those poor people through everything, and I was so glad — *so glad* — that you did not let me have that party."

LUCY'S BEST HAT.

“ **A** PLACE for everything, and everything in its place,” was a proverb that Mrs. Gifford very often repeated to her little daughter Lucy. She had good reason for it, for Lucy was one of those heedless children who never put anything in its place, and was always in a difficulty of some sort in consequence.

“ If you only *would* hang up your hat when you come in from play, Lucy, how much trouble and vexation it would save,” said her mother, one morning, after half an hour had been wasted in a vain search for the missing hat, and the *ninth* stroke of the clock had already proclaimed her late for school.

“ I’m sure I *did* hang it up ! ” Lucy exclaimed, her first impulse being always to excuse herself. “ The children must have taken it down ; they are always meddling with my things.”

“ They *never* meddle with them when they are put in the proper place,” her mother an-

swered; "but that is a piece of good fortune that seldom happens to *your* things, Lucy. However, it is only wasting time to talk about it. You must go to school, and you have nothing to wear but your best hat. So go up stairs for it quickly."

Lucy needed no second bidding for this. With nimble feet she flew up stairs, and with ready fingers she drew out the pretty Sunday hat from its box, and buttoned the elastic band under her chin. She was very fond of wearing nice clothes; and this hat, with its long ribbon streamers, and its brilliant bunch of poppies and green-grass blades, all spangled with "dew-drops," was a grand improvement upon the plain, tan-colored straw, with its brown trimmings, that she wore to school every day. She surveyed herself with a satisfied air, as she stood before the nursery mirror, and—

"How nice I look!" was the complacent reflection. "Anna Stanton won't call me Quaker to-day, I guess. I don't believe *her* Sunday hat is as pretty, for all she is so grand every day."

"And if I was your mother, I'd set you up with Sunday hats," grumbled Catharine, the

nursery-maid, who had been trotting up and down stairs in search of the tan-color until her feet were tired, and her temper slightly the worse for wear. "Much you mind all the trouble you've given people this blessed day! You should wear your old winter hood if *I* was your mother, and not be prinking there before the glass with your best things on, I can tell you, miss."

"And I can tell *you* that you'd better mind your own business, and not be lecturing me!" said Lucy, pertly. "You're not my mother, nor likely to be, thank goodness!"

"Indade, an' I can thank goodness for that, too," retorted Catharine; "an' it's a fine thing we've got such thankful hearts — the two of us."

"I shall tell mamma of you!" Lucy exclaimed, angrily, exasperated by the maid's scornful air. But her mother called imperatively at that moment from the foot of the stairs, —

"Lucy, how much longer do you intend to delay? Come down immediately, and go to school!"

So there was no time for complaints of Catharine, and her irritation was soon forgotten in

her complacent consciousness of her fine hat as she walked along to school; not a single compunction for her heedlessness, or the trouble it had caused her mother and Catharine, disturbed her mind: she did not even feel ashamed at her teacher's reproof for tardiness, and the assurance that she would get a bad mark. She saw the eyes of her classmates — Anna Stanton's in particular — fixed upon her poppy-flowers and white ribbons as she passed on to the wardrobe, and her foolish vanity excluded every better feeling.

It would hardly require a prophet to foresee that a day begun after this fashion was not likely to be a good day. Her heedlessness went into her lessons, as into everything else. She always put off studying them until the last minute, and her Geography and Definitions, especially, she never looked at until the half hour allowed for extra preparation before reciting. To-day, to her dismay, she discovered that both those books were missing from her desk. She had not the dimmest idea when or where she had seen them last — only a faint recollection of having squeezed the book of Definitions into the crown of her tan-colored hat (not much to the improvement of its shape) at *some* time or other, yesterday after-

noon. It was probably keeping company with the hat still, in some unknown corner, and as for the Geography — well! it wasn't in her desk, at any rate, and any further speculations concerning it were useless.

Her recitations in these branches to-day were not altogether satisfactory to her teacher. She did her best, peeping over the shoulders of the girl in front of her, and snatching a word here and there from the open book of the girl who sat beside her. But the answers, on the whole, were of such a speculative and imaginary character, that Miss Hartley was indignant, and the girls excessively amused.

"It was all her new hat, you may be sure," said Anna Stanton, at recess. "She's got poppies on the brain."

At which brilliant witticism there was a general laugh, which grew loud and long when Lucy and the poppies marched into the playground, grand and unconscious.

"What's the fun?" she asked. "What are you all laughing at?"

"O, nothing!" cried Anna Stanton, maliciously, "but a little geographical exercise. We were giving the boundaries of Brazil after the new style."

“No such thing!” exclaimed Nelly Harbaugh. “We were defining *idiosyncrasy* after the new style.”

“You be still!” Anna retorted. “I say, Lucy, don’t you want to hear the new boundary of Prazil? On the north by two large-sized poppies, on the east by a Leghorn hat, on the south by sixteen blades of grass, with the morning-dew thrown in, on the west by three yards of white ribbon, warranted not to wash!”

Another peal of laughter followed this smart speech, and before Lucy could make any reply, Nelly Harbaugh began a string of nonsense equally witty and equally ill-natured, in which Lucy’s hat and her unfortunate failures in definitions were absurdly connected. In the midst of it, Anna Stanton, anxious to make a further display of her cleverness, broke in with a parody upon Betty Martin, which she sang at the top of her voice, —

“Hi, Lucy Gifford, tip-toe, tip-toe,

Hi, Lucy Gifford, tip-toe fine;

She can’t wear a brown hat, she can’t wear a black hat,

She has to have a Leghorn to please her mind!”

This was too much for endurance. Lucy,

half choking with rage, gasped out, "I'll tell Miss Hartley, so I will!" and flew, furious, from the playground up to the class-room again. Miss Hartley sat there sharpening lead-pencils, and took the complaint very coolly.

"I am sorry the little girls laugh at you, my dear," she said; "but you know you did make most ridiculous mistakes in your lessons. I was quite provoked with you, for there is no excuse for such failures. That you lost your books, was certainly not one: it was rather an aggravation of the offence."

"They need not make fun of my hat at any rate," sobbed Lucy, passing by the book question. "I'm sure it's as nice and pretty as any of theirs."

"Very pretty, indeed," said Miss Hartley; "rather fine for school, however, and that is the reason, I suppose—together with the fact that you were a little vain of your appearance in it this morning—that the girls were tempted to laugh at you. At the same time it was not kind of them, and I shall tell them so when they come in."

Cool comfort, but all that was to be got from Miss Hartley; so Lucy retired to her desk in the frame of mind generally described as the "sulks." It was not improved by the taunts and whispers

of her schoolmates after Miss Hartley's reproof for their ridicule of her. "Tell-tale! Cry-baby! Dear little thing, it shouldn't have its fine hat laughed at, so it shouldn't, bless its little heart!" were some of the jeers that Anna Stanton and her set kept flinging to and fro all the afternoon. Lucy felt as if she was being slapped and pinched, or stung by invisible gnats; she would have liked to strike Anna Stanton, she was so angry with her; but she could not complain, for no one actually said anything *to* her. The mocking whisper floated past her in the air like thistle-down, and when she turned to catch it, it was gone.

It was altogether a most miserable afternoon, and Lucy was glad to escape from her tormentors by going home as soon as possible after school was dismissed. She did not carry her head quite so proudly as she had done in the morning; neither did she stop to "prink" at the looking-glass, as Catharine said, before she took off the unfortunate "best hat."

"I'll never wear it to school again — never!" was her inward determination. "I'll find my brown hat, if I have to search all night for it!"

As it happened, however, the brown hat was already found. "Tito," a little dog belonging

to the children, had dragged it up by its ribbons from the coal-cellar, the book of Definitions still jammed in the crown; and Lucy all at once remembered that she had come in through the basement entrance the afternoon before, and left the hat and books on a bench in the cellar, while she passed on to the kitchen to get a glass of water. From there she went into the garden, to look at some double-spotted lady-slippers just blooming, and then a story-book claimed her attention, so that she did not care about going out to play, and the hat was forgotten from henceforth.

It was in a dismal plight when Tito finally brought it up stairs. He had dragged it about amongst the coal until it was almost as black as it was brown, and as for the shape it was left in, the least said on the subject is soonest mended.

Whether it could ever be worn again was a doubtful question; at the least it would be a week before it could be made fit to be seen, the milliner said. So Miss Lucy had to wear her Leghorn again in spite of her resolution, and to put up with plenty of teasing in consequence; for, when school-girls take up a silly joke, they are not apt to drop it in a hurry.

A certain amount of vexation, however, is wholesome, by way of warning. What her mother's gentle remonstrances could not effect, the raillery of her schoolmates did; and now Mrs. Gifford congratulates herself that Lucy has really begun to appreciate, and put in practice, that excellent old rule, of "a place for everything, and everything in its place."

TOM'S ALLOWANCE:

HOW HE EARNED IT, AND HOW HE SPENT IT.

“O DEAR! The house is as cold as a barn. I *do* wish Uncle Levi would speak to that lazy Tom, and make him light the stove *a little* before ten o'clock in the morning.”

Miss Julia's shoulders, very much shrugged up, and the expression of her countenance, at this moment decidedly cross, were quite in keeping with this impatient speech. It was a frosty October morning, in a climate where winter begins early, and there was no denying that the room had a very barn-like feeling, and a very comfortless, discouraging appearance in the cold, gray light of the early hour; for it was not ten o'clock, or anywhere near it, — that was only a little exaggeration of Miss Julia's, — as the hands of the old-fashioned “moon-face” in the corner, just now pointing to *seven*, were ready to prove.

It was a great, queer, old-fashioned room,

altogether. The eight-day clock, in one corner, was fronted by a cupboard, with glass doors, in another; a "Dr. Nott" stove stood by the chimney-piece, and all the chairs and tables had spider-legs and claw-feet, and a generally antiquated appearance. When the breakfast was laid on one of the old tables, and the fire glowing from the old stove, and the sun shining through the narrow, deep-set windows, it was a very cheerful and pleasant room. But just now there was nothing cheerful about it. The stove was black and fireless; newspapers were scattered untidily about the floor; chairs huddled in disorderly groups; Uncle Levi's cigar-stand, full of ashes and half-smoked cigars, upon the round table; and dust thick upon everything.

It was Julia's business to bring order out of all this confusion; her morning duty to dust, arrange the furniture, and set the breakfast table before Uncle Levi came down stairs. She did not particularly like the task at any time, but she liked it still less when Tom was lazy, as he was very apt to be, and neglected *his* morning work — making the fire — until after she came down.

Her feather duster was flourished this morning, with many a jerk of her shoulders, and many a

fretful expression of her discontent; and when Master Tom made his appearance at last, just as she was arranging the cups and saucers on the breakfast-tray, she was quite in the humor to give him a good scolding, and did it accordingly.

"It's too mean of you, I declare, Tom!" was her opening salutation. "I wouldn't be as selfish and disagreeable as you are for all the world!"

"What's the row, now?" asked Tom, coolly. He was accustomed to "Jule's tantrums," as he called them, and they did not make much impression on him.

"It's very well to ask what's the row, as if you didn't know! Just look at the clock, and see what time it is; and then look at that stove, if you please."

"Very good stove; what's the matter with it?" said Tom, provokingly. "As for the clock, it's half past seven exactly, and Uncle Levi comes down to breakfast at eight — not a minute earlier, not a minute later. We'll give Dr. Nott a jolly red nose before that time, Miss Jule; so don't you fret."

"Yes, and that's all you care about, you disoblising, selfish boy!" Julia exclaimed, angrily.

"You'll have the fire ready for Uncle Levi, because you don't want to get a scolding; but you never care how cold *I* am, with all this dusting and cleaning to do, and the room like a barn. I think you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"You take a nice way to make me ashamed, Jule," said Tom, looking up from the pan of ashes he was lifting out. "At this present minute I'm more ashamed of *you*."

"I don't care if you are!" Julia's voice grew louder, and her cheek redder with her anger. "I can tell you one thing, Mister Tom, I shall speak to Uncle Levi this very morning, and we'll see if you are to impose upon me this way any longer. And another thing, you may just clear up all the mess you make with those ashes. *I'm* not going to dust after you!"

So she flirted out of the room, not condescending to notice Tom's irritating advice:

"Take it easy, Jule; you don't look pretty when you get so red in the face."

She was as good as her word when breakfast-time came; and as soon as she had poured out the coffee, she began, in an injured tone, and flashing a defiant look at Tom, to pour out her grievances.

"I don't think it's fair, Uncle Levi. I think you might speak to Tom, and make him get up earlier in the morning. I have to do all my work in the cold; and if I say anything, he only laughs at me, and makes hateful speeches."

"Hey! What's all that, Tom?" Uncle Levi laid down his newspaper, and pushed back his spectacles, with a questioning look at Tom. "You and Julia ought not to quarrel. You are the same as brother and sister."

"O, I guess not!" exclaimed Julia, tossing her head. "I'm glad he isn't my brother, for I don't like him any too well as a cousin."

Tom only laughed. "It's nothing but Jule's nonsense, Uncle Levi. I didn't make the fire early enough to suit her this morning, and so she was cross."

"He didn't come down till half past seven," cried Julia, "and he never does; and I say it's very mean and selfish of him."

"Why don't you get up earlier, Tom?" asked Uncle Levi, with a perplexed look, as if he did not quite understand the vexed question.

"O, I don't know," Tom answered, lazily. "I get up time enough to make the fire for breakfast. What's the use of bothering about it an hour beforehand?"

“The use of it is not to annoy your cousin.”

“O, she’s always being annoyed. If it isn’t one thing it’s another. I couldn’t undertake to keep *her* in a good humor.”

Tom sent a mischievous glance across the table at Julia, and her tongue was ready with a sharp retort; but Uncle Levi prevented it by speaking first. A bright thought had just occurred to him, by which he supposed he could settle the whole difficulty.

“I’ll tell you what, Tom,” he said, “you’re always wanting pocket-money, and now I’ll give you a chance to earn some. You shall have three cents a day for every morning that you are up the first one in the house, and have the fire made, and the room comfortable before your cousin comes down. What do you say to that?”

“Done!” cried Tom, in great glee. “That’s the way to put it, Uncle Levi. Give a fellow an object, and you’ll see if I don’t get up with the larks.”

“Very well. Remember, though, that your allowance will be docked every day that you are not punctual. And now, Julia, my dear, I hope you won’t have to complain of him again.”

So Uncle Levi sipped his coffee, and retired

behind the newspaper once more, convinced that the matter was settled in the most satisfactory manner. Which it was, as far as Tom was concerned. He was jubilant in the prospect of such a permanent fund, and visions of new skates, new sleds, tops, and taffy unlimited, danced already in his brain.

Julia, on the contrary, was more disgusted than ever. *She* got up early every morning; had done it faithfully for a year and a half, ever since she came there to live. But no reward was offered to *her*! It never occurred to Uncle Levi that *she* had any use for pocket-money—no, indeed! And she might go on so forever, working like a slave, and getting no credit for it, while Tom was coaxed and paid for doing the least thing. It was too mean, it was too unfair, Julia thought, angrily and bitterly. And it was true that she had some reason to feel herself aggrieved.

Uncle Levi never meant to be partial, or to make the slightest difference between the two children. They had been left orphans about the same time, both dependent upon him for home and support; and he had cared for them as kindly as he knew how. But he was an old bachelor,

and children — especially girls — were mysterious beings to him. He did not know what they thought about, or what they wanted ; he had no idea how to talk to them, and he felt more comfortable when they were out of his sight. So he had left Julia pretty much to Mrs. Croaker, and had little to say to her himself, simply for the reason that he did not know how.

It was different with Tom. He was an outspoken, careless, good-tempered fellow, who was apt to ask for what he wanted, and not be bashful about it either. Uncle Levi could understand Tom ; so, naturally, he took more notice of him than he did of Julia, who was shy, and sensitive, and hardly ever spoke to him on any account. The one got the lion's share of the indulgences, the other got the lion's share of the tasks ; but Uncle Levi was quite unconscious of both facts.

He had an old servant, who had kept house for him ever since anybody could remember. Her name was Mrs. Croaker, and her nature was something similar. She had strict notions about the way in which girls should be brought up. Plenty of work, and very little play ; no nonsense about dolls and story-books ; no foolish finery to

turn their heads; no company to waste their time; schooling enough for reading and writing, and then — housework and sewing from morning to night. To do those two things as they ought to be done, was the chief end of woman, in Mrs. Croaker's catechism.

So you see, in her hands, Julia did not lead a very easy life. There was some task or other for every hour that she was out of school: the breakfast-room in the morning, and her own bed to make up; the tea-cups to wash at night; stockings to darn; patch-work and knitting for evenings; lessons in making bread and pies on Saturdays; and any quantity of very tiresome advice and scolding mixed up with it all.

While Tom was not called upon for anything, except an errand now and then, to bring Mrs. Croaker something from the village; and regularly to make this one fire. And now he was to be paid three cents a day for that, while Julia had three times the work to do, and was paid no cents at all. Certainly, it seemed very aggravating.

She was too proud, however, to complain; and neither Tom nor Uncle Levi imagined how she felt, as she sat silent, and "sulky," Tom would have said, behind the breakfast-tray. She poured

the coffee for them, but they never noticed that she did not drink her own, or touch the food upon her plate. The poor little thing was swelling with a sense of wrong and injustice, aching with loneliness, and longing for some one to comfort and sympathize with her; but not a soul in the house had any idea of what she kept shut up in her little proud heart.

How should they? Uncle Levi didn't look at her twice a day; Mrs. Croaker had no heart of her own to speak about, and couldn't be expected to understand Julia's. Children were nuisances, and she had no opinion of girls in particular. Tom's thoughts were all taken up with his own amusements; he had plenty, though Julia had none. It was no wonder that she grew irritable, moody, and unhappy.

Tom called her cross, and teased her, and laughed at her; but it did not occur to him that he could do anything to make her more amiable. He got up punctually, and made the fire every morning in good season, and he wondered that she was so often snappish with him, in spite of it, when she came down. He did not know that she never looked at "Dr. Nott" without a bitter feeling of injustice and partiality, which

was all the harder to bear for being shut up in her own heart, and never expressed to any one.

So the time passed on until Christmas came. Tom earned his allowance honestly every day, having never once failed in his duty to Dr. Nott since that morning in October. His exemplary conduct was surprising to Uncle Levi, not so much because he *earned* the money, as because he did not spend it. Not a single sixpence had been drawn as yet, for Tom knew that if he had it in small sums he should spend it in the same way, and he had an ambitious project in his mind which was not to be accomplished on small capital.

This was no less than an outfit of steel "shoes" for his beloved sled, "The Black Wolf." Steel shoes were rather expensive affairs, greatly admired by all the boys in Edgehill, but possessed by very few. Dick Hartley and Steve Whitlock were the only boys in Tom's set whose sleds were supplied with the coveted addition. *Their* fathers were the richest men in the village; the sons, consequently, could afford luxuries which other boys might not aspire to.

Tom cared nothing about *luxuries*, properly speaking. He did not envy Steve Whitlock's

handsome clothes, or Dick Hartley's lunch-basket, stuffed every day with dainties. His rough jacket kept him warm, and bread and butter were as good as cake when he was hungry. But those steel shoes he *did* covet, for the reason that, in all boyish sports, Tom liked to be second to nobody. He was active and daring in everything. No one could beat him in skating, or coasting, or swimming, or climbing, if only he had a fair chance. His "Black Wolf" was acknowledged to be the swiftest runner of all the *iron-shod* sleds; but, of course, it could not compete with "The Red Fox" and "The Sylph," when they shot by on their smooth, shining steel tires.

Tom had gazed after these with longing eyes many a time; but the price — two dollars and a half for the pair — made the longing vain. He had more than once tried to save up the odd pennies and sixpences that fell into his possession, but they accumulated so slowly that he had given it up as hopeless. Now, however, "thanks to Jule's tantrum," as he said, laughingly, the long-desired articles were in his reach.

The three cents *per diem* had grown by Christmas Eve to two dollars and thirty-seven cents,

and Tom calculated that Uncle Levi would give him at least a quarter for a Christmas gift; so that by New Year's Day the Black Wolf would have her new shoes on—and then let Dick Hartley and Steve Whitlock look out for their honors!

He was in such a good humor with his bright expectations that he felt like being amiable to Julia. So he ran into the dining-room, where she sat darning stockings the afternoon before Christmas, and asked her to go out on the ice with him. It was a half holiday at the girls' school, as well as at the academy, and groups of merry children—boys and girls together—were down at the skating-pond. Julia knew they were to be there this afternoon, and some of her schoolmates had invited her to join them. But she had refused them all, for a reason of her own; and here she sat, poking a darning-needle in and out of Uncle Levi's blue yarn stockings, looking just as "blue" and unhappy herself when Tom came after her.

"I say, Jule," he began, in his usual blunt fashion, "tuck away those blue rags, and get your muffles on. There's a jolly time down at the pond, and I came after you on purpose."

"Very much obliged to you," she answered, shortly, "but I can't go."

"Nonsense! Why not? As if you couldn't darn stockings any other day! But I can tell you, you don't always have a chance for such a jolly slide! The ice is like glass, and the girls are having such fun! Come, get your things on, and don't be a goose!"

"I shan't be such a goose as to go," she returned, coldly.

"And why not, I wonder?" Tom began to get vexed. "Are you obliged to darn stockings for a living?"

"It's not the stockings."

"What the mischief is it, then?"

"It's because I've nothing fit to wear. I don't choose to go among those girls, who are all dressed so nicely, in the shabby old clothes I have to wear. It's bad enough to have to go to school in them—but I can't help that."

"That's a woman's reason for everything, I do believe!" Tom exclaimed, impatiently. "I wonder what ails the clothes you've got on? I don't see any difference in 'em from the clothes other girls wear."

"Of course you don't, because you don't care

anything about me, and you never notice what I have on. I guess if you had to wear such a miserable old hood as *that*, though," — and Julia pointed scornfully to a quilted brown merino hood on a chair beside her, — "you *would* see the difference."

"It's a very good hood as far as I see," Tom returned; "about as good looking as my cap, I guess."

"Your cap is the same sort of a cap that other boys wear," she answered, sharply. "My hood might have come out of the ark for all its likeness to the things that are worn nowadays. Everybody else has a worsted hood, — something bright-colored and pretty, — but I have to wear this old dud that everybody laughs at, because there's no one in all the world that cares a fig how I look. And I wish I was dead, and with my mother — that I do!"

At this climax the blue yarn stockings were tossed passionately upon the floor, and Julia rushed out of the room in a storm of tears, which she was too proud to let Tom see.

He stood and looked after her for a full minute in silent wonder. Then he picked up the unfortunate hood, and examined it closely. It was

made of brown merino, inside and out, quilted in diamonds by Mrs. Croaker's own bony fingers, and tied with stingy-looking brown merino strings. It certainly was not pretty, but then it looked warm and comfortable. Tom couldn't see why it wasn't just as good as a "worsted hood," and, by the way, what were "worsted hoods"?

"I declare I don't know," he said to himself. "I haven't the dimmest idea what the difference is; but I suppose there must be a difference, or Jule wouldn't get into such a tantrum. Well, it's no use wasting time here; if she won't go, she won't."

So he marched out again, and made his way in a few minutes to the skating-pond. A group of girls called after him, —

"Where's Julia, Tom? Isn't she coming out?"

And when he shook his head by way of answer, one of them ran forward merrily, and held out her arms to prevent his coming on the ice.

"You're to go right back, skates and all," she cried, laughingly, "and bring Julia out! It's a shame the way that old Mrs. Croaker keeps her at home! She never has any fun at all!"

"But Mrs. Croaker isn't keeping her now," said Tom; "she's keeping herself. I asked her to come with me, and she wouldn't."

"Why not?" cried the whole group, in chorus.

"I'm sure I don't know. She said something about her hood being shabby, and not like other people's. I didn't make out exactly what she meant."

"O, pooh! Is that all? Who cares about the hood?"

It was pretty little Kitty Carey who spoke, with a merry shake of her head that set in motion all the balls of her "rigulette," — such a host of dainty little balls, nestling in a scarlet fringe above her brown curls, and tossing themselves about in a bewitching sort of way, that made Tom, for the first time, comprehend the difference.

"I don't know about that, — *I* should care," said Annie Rosman, in answer to Kitty's speech. She was quite conscious that her own hood was pretty and becoming.

"I shouldn't want to wear that old brown merino thing any more than Julia does. It looks as if it came out of the ark."

“Why, that’s what Jule said!” exclaimed Tom, in astonishment. “Is it really such a horrid old affair after all?”

There was a general burst of laughter at his perplexed look, and two or three voices answered, promptly, —

“Of course it is! Look at *my* hood — look at Kitty’s — look at Belle’s, — don’t you see any difference?”

And Tom had to confess, when he opened his eyes at last, that there *was* a difference. Carry Blake had on something in blue and white that made her look as fair as a lily; Annie Rosman’s golden hair peeped out from a border of brilliant scarlet; Lucy Whitlock’s laughing eyes sparkled under a crimson hood, spotted with black; Belle Hartley wore a dainty white one, tied under the chin with rose-colored ribbons.

They were all graceful in shape, bright in color, becoming in effect: as different as possible from the clumsy, sun-brown thing which, now that Tom really thought about it, made Julia look so plain and common — “for all the world like a servant girl,” he thought, with a sudden remembrance of Mrs. Blake’s housemaid, who had been sweeping the doorsteps as Tom passed

by that very afternoon, with exactly such a hood upon her head.

He could not put the thought out of his mind all through the afternoon. The frosty air rang with merry laughter, the ice glittered with the long, shining tracks of the skates, the pretty hoods flitted in and out of the crowd, now up and now down, as the wearers lost their balance on the slippery surface, and the boys wheeled and circled round them in many an airy flight. But though Tom's skates went ringing along the ice as merrily as the rest, he could not enjoy the fun as usual for thinking of poor little Julia, alone in the dingy, old-fashioned dining-room, darning blue yarn stockings, and wishing she was dead.

"Hullo, Tom!" called a boy, skating past him. "Black Wolf got her steel shoes on?"

"No!" answered Tom, emphatically.

"How long before you get 'em?"

"Some time next year, maybe — maybe not at all."

"Why, what do you mean by that?" exclaimed the boy, skating back to Tom, and balancing himself in front of him. "You told me

you would have money enough by Christmas; you know you did."

"Suppose I did? and if I choose to spend it for something else, what's that to you?" and Tom wheeled round, made a series of extraordinary curves, and then struck a bee line for the edge of the pond. There he unbuckled his skates, slung them over his arm, and marched off towards home. He had made a resolution, and it was Tom's way to put his resolves into execution with as little delay as possible.

"Uncle Levi, I would like to draw my allowance now, if you please," he said, as he walked into the library, where Uncle Levi sat in a cloud of cigar smoke. "Two dollars and thirty-seven cents for twenty-five days in October, thirty in November, and twenty-four in December."

"Well," said Uncle Levi, "this is rather an expensive bargain of mine. Two dollars and thirty-seven cents! What do you intend to do with all that money, sir?"

"If you please, sir, I would rather not tell you."

The color rushed up to Tom's brown cheek, and Uncle Levi looked surprised.

"Don't throw it away for nonsense, my boy.

It's your own, to be sure, but still I wouldn't spend it foolishly."

"I don't intend to, Uncle Levi. At least, I don't think you'd call it foolishness if you knew; but I'd rather not tell you just yet."

"Very well;" and Uncle Levi handed out the money.

Never in his life before had Tom possessed so much, and he felt very rich indeed as he marched out of the room, jingling his silver quarters, and tossing them from one hand to the other.

Perhaps you have already guessed what he meant to do with them, and so you'll not be so much astonished as Julia was the next morning, when she discovered a brown paper parcel on the foot of her bed, directed to "Miss Julia Jerome."

She had been dreaming — poor little Jule! — about Christmas-time at home when her mother was living, and there were always pretty gifts for the children, and a merry, happy day for all the household. She waked up with a start, — somebody had thrown an orange at her in her dream, — and for a minute, as she sat up in bed, rubbing her eyes, she fancied it was all true, and cried, "Merry Christmas!" half aloud, before she knew what she was doing.

The next minute came back the dreary recollection of orphanhood and loneliness, and she murmured, bitterly, —

“Merry Christmas, indeed! There’ll be no Christmas in *this* house — there never is!”

But the brown paper parcel caught her eye suddenly, and she snatched it up with eager curiosity, and tore it open. It only contained a hood — a pretty, crimson hood — with a soft, puffy border, tufted with chinchilla spots, and two long, crimson ribbons to tie under the chin. A slip of paper pinned to it had a line in Tom’s boyish handwriting: —

“DEAR JULE: Wish you ‘Merry Christmas!’ and the next time I ask you to go out with me, I hope you won’t be ashamed of your hood.

“Your affectionate cousin, TOM.

“P. S. — You may thank yourself and Dr. Nott for this. Not me.”

Was that anything to make her burst into tears and hide her face in the bed-clothes, and cry for five minutes as if her heart would break? Of course not; but then Jule had a way of crying when she was pleased as well as when she was

sorry ; and she was all alone now — nobody could laugh at her for being foolish.

The first thought that shaped itself out of her excitement was, —

“ O, how selfish, and mean, and hateful I have been ! To think how I grudged Tom that money ; how cross I’ve been ever since, and how he has spent it for me ! ”

It was quite five minutes more before she could allow herself to try the hood on, and see how pretty it was, and how very becoming. She came to it at last, however, and managed to dress herself, too. Then she darted off in search of Tom, who was down stairs on his knees before Dr. Nott, just as busy as if Christmas was no more than any other day. But he was on the lookout for Julia, nevertheless, and ready to give her a complacent kiss in return for the enthusiastic hug she inflicted upon him.

“ I’ll never be cross to you again, Tom, never ! ” she declared, solemnly.

“ I won’t count upon that,” he answered, mischievously.

“ But you may, for I mean it. I was never cross to anybody that loved me, Tom ; only I never knew you did before.”

Tom had not been quite sure of that fact himself till this moment. It came over him suddenly now that he *might* grow very fond of her if she continued to look as pretty, and speak to him in that tender, wistful way. But he answered with a boy's conceit, —

“There's lots of things you don't know yet, Miss Jule. Hold on to what you've learned, though, and keep up to your promises.”

“I always do,” said Julia, a little proudly. “You shall see.”

“Another thing,” he added, rather more tenderly, “don't say again that I don't care how you look. You look like a little beauty this morning, that's a fact. And next to Kitty Carey I think you are the prettiest girl in town.”

At which Julia told him he was a goose, regardless of gender. But she laughed, and she blushed, and looked prettier than ever in her delight at Tom's admiration.

So, of course, it was a happy Christmas after that, and it grew into a surprisingly merry one, too; for when Uncle Levi found out the state of things, he concluded to profit by Tom's example, and make Christmas gifts himself, which was a thing he had not thought of doing in many a

long year before. Julia had an opportunity to display her new hood immediately after breakfast, when Uncle Levi invited her to walk down town with Tom and himself. The walk ended, to her surprise, at Mr. Thingumbob's fancy store, — "open on Christmas Day till twelve o'clock only," — and when they went out they had certainly more to carry than when they went in.

Uncle Levi's pockets bulged out in every direction; so did Tom's. Julia's hands were filled chiefly with the dearest little gray muff, whose crimson lining and tassels exactly matched her hood. She had longed unspeakably for a muff, and needed nothing more to complete her happiness. Yet Uncle Levi, in his sudden enjoyment of the thing, and in the Christmas excitement which seemed to be in the air, seemed bent upon filling her cup to overflowing. A work-box, with a silver thimble, and all sorts of implements, was added to the muff: and then a brilliant box of bon-bons, and lastly, a book of fairy tales, gorgeous in scarlet and gold binding.

As for Tom, he was entirely satisfied with the new penknife, the handsome color-box and brushes, and the nicely bound copy of "The Young Marooners," which fell to his share.

Even Mrs. Croaker was not forgotten ; and Julia was delighted at being called upon to select something as a gift from herself, and something also from Tom, as well as from Uncle Levi. She pondered and puzzled over the important matter a great while, but finally accepted Mr. Thingumbob's suggestion of a new pair of spectacles as Uncle Levi's gift, and a fine, soft blanket shawl as a joint offering from Tom and herself.

" Pretty much ! " said Tom, scornfully, " when Uncle Levi pays for it ! "

He didn't disdain, however, to attend the presentation with Julia, and accepted Mrs. Croaker's grim acknowledgments with becoming gravity.

" There wern't no call to give it to me," she remarked, solemnly, smoothing down the soft, gray fringe, with appreciation of its " quality ; " " I aint one o' the sort that expects to get presents for doin' their dooty. But it's a fine piece of goods, and I'm obleeged to you both."

For three days after that it was remarked that Mrs. Croaker was in an angelic temper, and in fact she never was quite so grim and unsympathetic again, as Julia had thought her before. Perhaps it was because Julia herself had met

with a change. She certainly was not so miserable as she used to think herself, nor so moody and fretful as other people had found her, after that happy Christmas Day. She knew now that Tom loved her, and that Uncle Levi *did* care about her; and so she set to work to make herself worthy of love and consideration.

Tom never regretted having to wait three whole months for his steel shoes, and getting no opportunity to use them then. The constant affection and kindness which Julia gave him, and her bright, cheerful companionship which made home pleasant for him, were better than all the coasting triumphs of the season; certainly worth all it had cost him to win them. "The only wonder was that it had taken him so long to find out what a nice little thing Jule really was!" he thought.

Possibly some other boys might make a similar discovery concerning their sisters or girl-cousins, if they went to work in the same spirit. I leave the suggestion for particular consideration, and wish you all

A very Merry Christmas!

